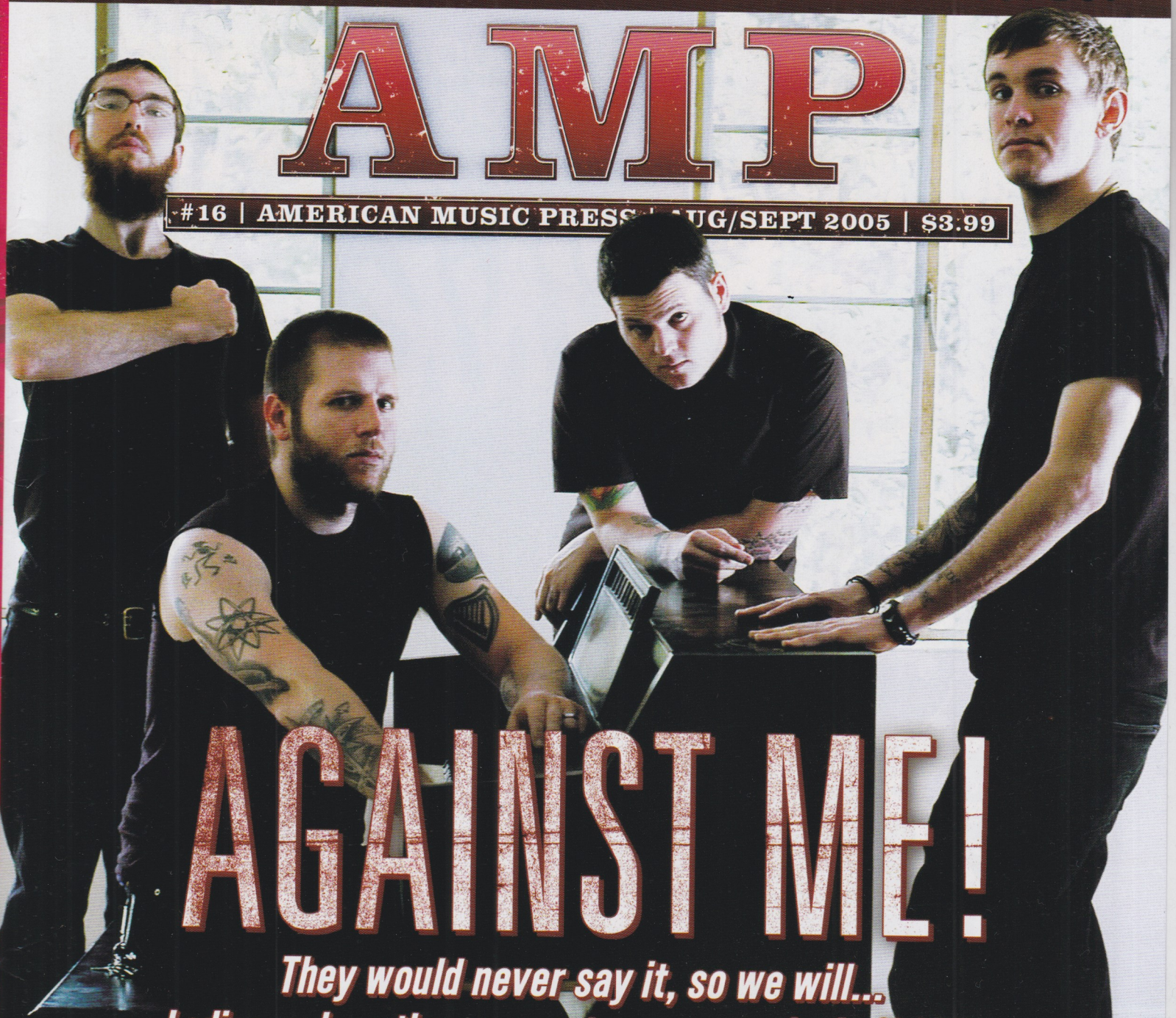
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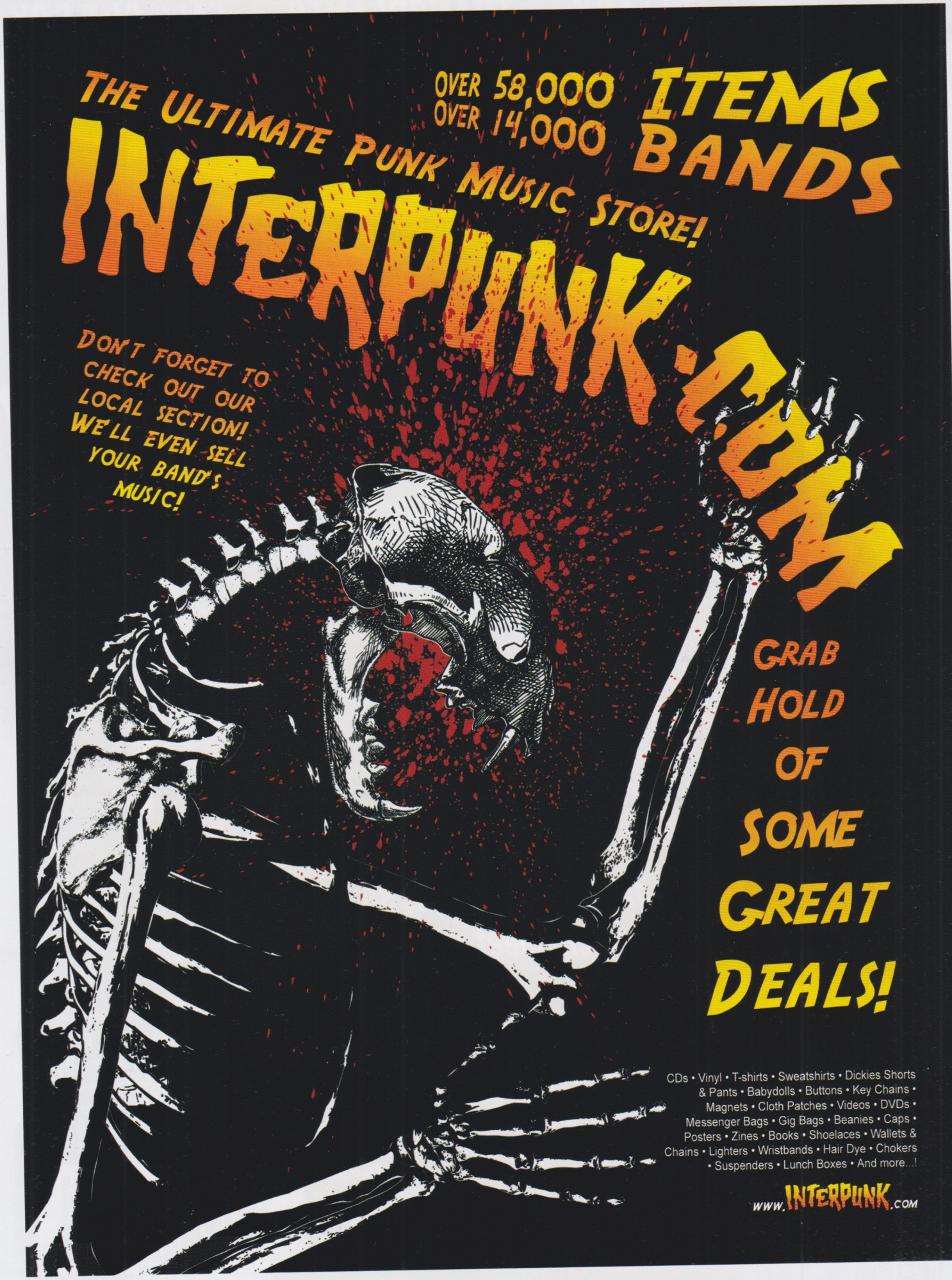
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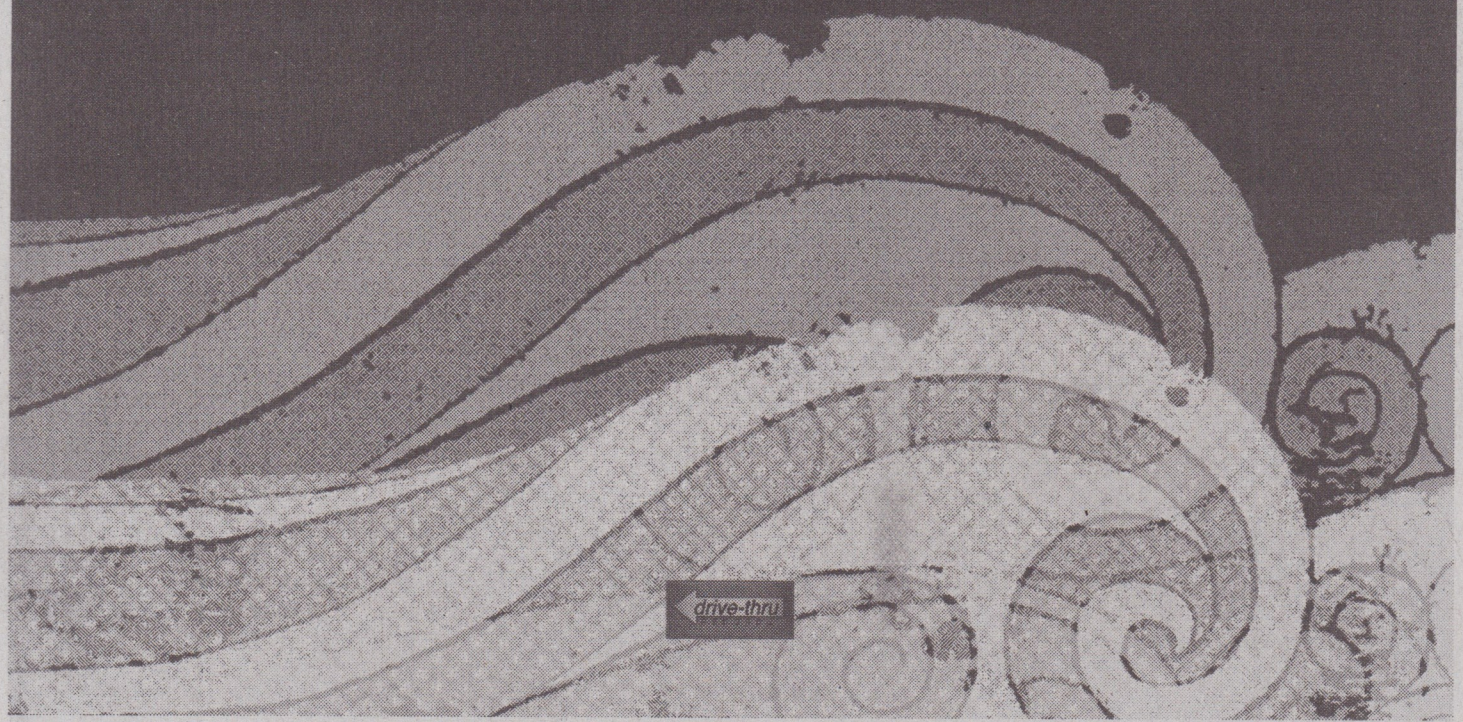
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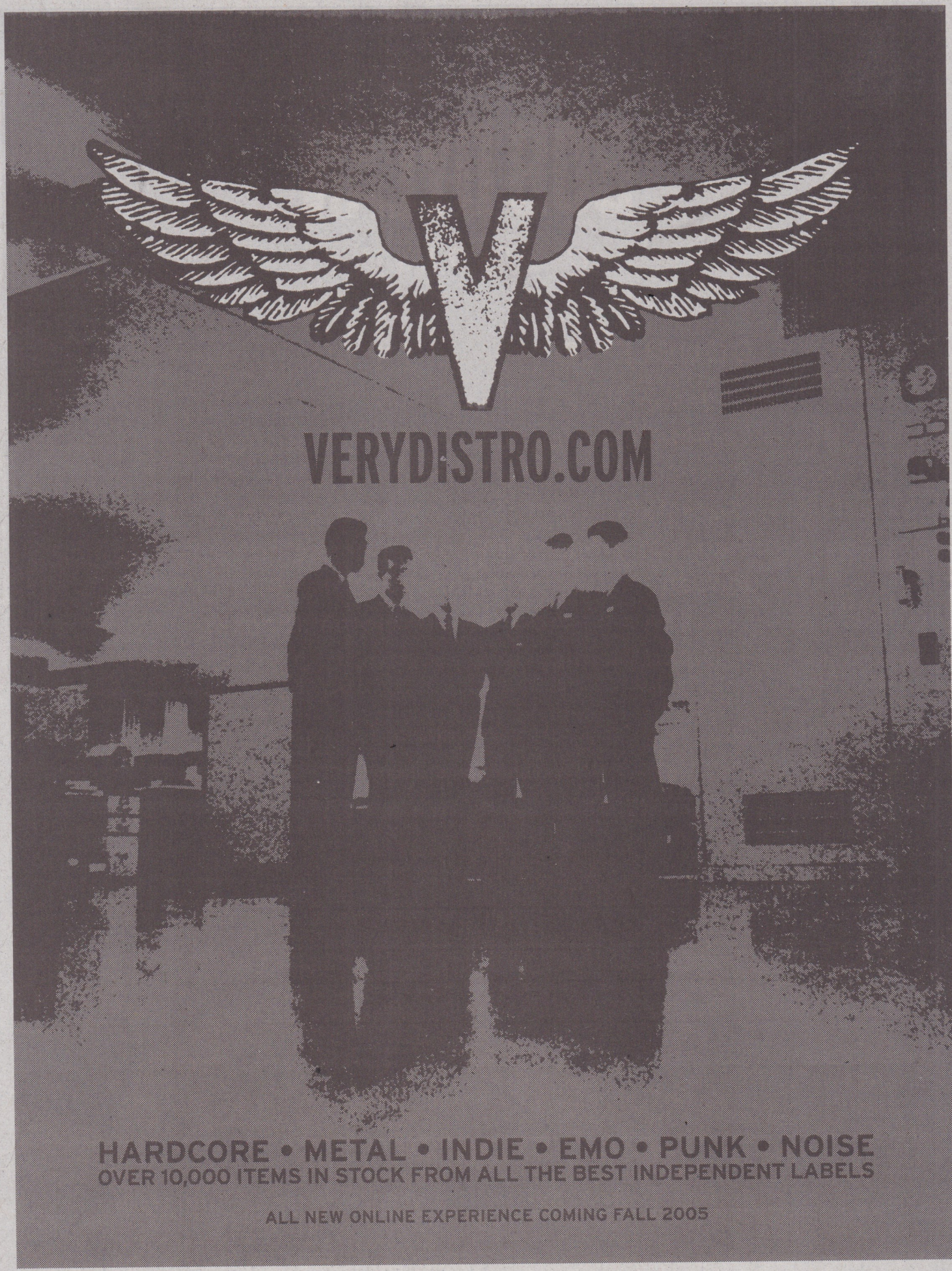
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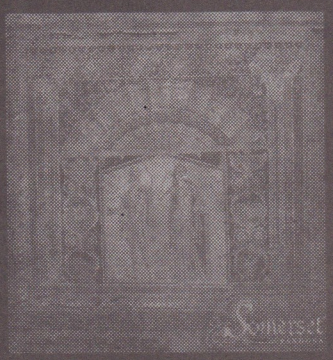
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ATTENTION:

Alright. Obviously we are a fanzine, and obviously you are fans of bands that we cover (thus you holding us in your hands right now). In an effort to connect you with those that you love, we have decided to start a new section in the magazine where you can write in questions for members of the scene (band members / record label people / industry figures / pimps / etc.) that they could possibly answer for you. It will also be a general question area, that we can try to direct to the right people (ie: How do I get my band on the Warped Tour would be sent over to someone like Kevin Lyman). Just to save us both some time, questions like, "Hey, Davey Havoc, what's your phone number and what are you doing on Friday night?" will probably not be responded to. So, let the flood gates of the "Does Tom Gable have a girl-friend?" questions flow:

connections@ampmagazine.com

We have also started a column for the almighty Kurt Ballou (guitar god from the almighty CONVERGE) about guitar tech questions. If you have anything that you might be wondering in that area, please get in touch as well.

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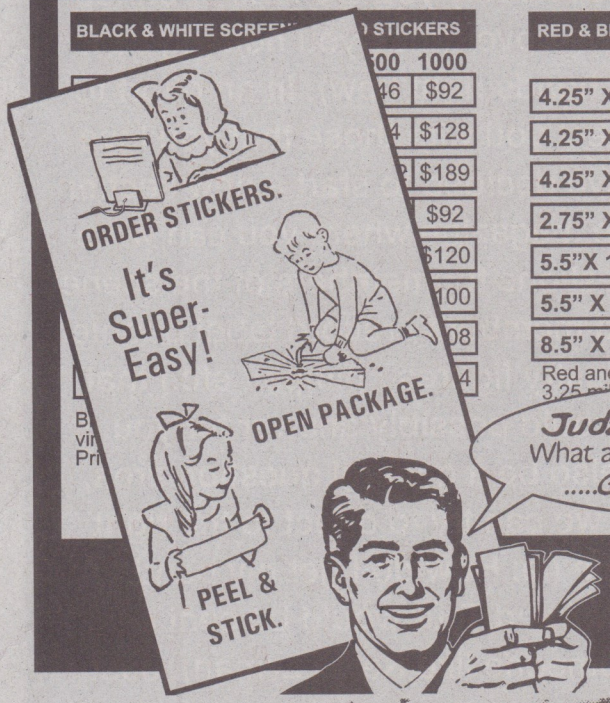
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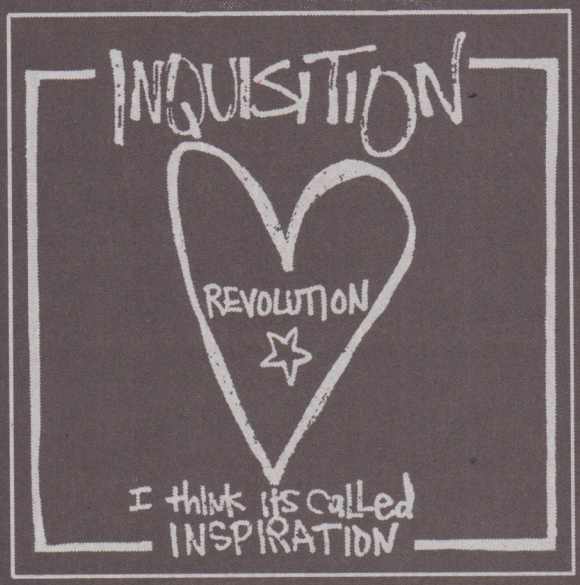
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INQUISITION

"Revolution... I think its called Inspiration"
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A band like Inquisition made a dent in the underground punk community in their heyday, when they should have been a full blown car crash. *-Tim Barry (AVAIL)*

Very few things will leave as lasting an impression on me as the first chord of the first song I heard by them. *-Jason Black (HOT WATER MUSIC)*

Inquisition had it all, the energy, the desperation, political lyrics, it was all there and it got me so psyched. *-Tim (ENSIGN)*

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WORD ON THE STREET

Adolescents join Finger Records

Finger Records announced the signing of legendary Orange County punk rock act The Adolescents. The long running band celebrated their 25th anniversary and to commemorate the event they released their first new full length since 1988. The July 12th release, titled O.C. Confidential follows the Balboa Fun Zone released more than fifteen years ago. Since their last full length in 1988, the band has issued a number of releases and live recordings including Live at the House of Blues and The Complete Demos (1980-1986).

Hot Snakes (2000-2005)

Swami Records' Hot Snakes have decided to part ways. The punk rock act had released a series of records on band member John Reis' Swami Records, including Automatic Midnight, Suicide Invoice, Audit in Progress and most recently, Peel Sessions. In a hand-scrawled message, Reis had this to say: "So the rather sad news to report is that Hot Snakes will be packing it in after our current plans. It was a complete thrill to be part of and satisfied my insatiable hunger for sinister throbbing action. Thank you to all that urged us along and leant an ear for us to abuse." As explained in the message, the band will complete the remainder of their tour which includes some Australia dates and has also planned two farewell shows in Los Angeles and San Diego with The Husbands and The Heartaches.

Promise Ring to reunite, Jimmy Eat World, Isis, others to perform at Flower15

The lineup has been announced for the upcoming Flower Booking six-night fundraiser, Flower15. The six day event will take place November 8th through the 13th at the Metro in Chicago, IL. The show is intended to commemorate the 15th year of the long-running booking agency and will feature appearances by Local H, Isis, Ted Leo and the Pharmacists, Jimmy Eat World, and a reunion by Milwaukee's The Promise Ring with many more artists and band reunions expected to be announced over the next few weeks. The festival aims to raise $50,000 or more for P.L.A.Y. (Possibilities in Life: Art for Youth) a youth charity that aims to provide a constructive and creative outlet for young victims of abuse.



Corgan announces plans to resurrect Smashing Pumpkins

In a full page ad placed in today's edition of the Chicago Tribune, Billy Corgan has announced plans to resurrect the popular and influential 90s "alternative rock" act Smashing Pumpkins. While the former band mates have gone on to A Perfect Circle and solo projects, Corgan's statement does not make it entirely clear if he intends to reunite with the three surviving members of the band or to perform under the name.

Drive-Thru to release double disc Bob Dylan tribute

Drive Thru has set an August 16th release date for an upcoming double disc tribute to Bob Dylan. The set will include 21 Bob Dylan songs covered by a variety of artists including Something Corporate, Rx Bandits, As Tall As Lions and many others. Spearheaded by Drive Thru co-founder Stefanie Reines who provided a list of forty songs for the bands to choose, Reines had this to say: This project is all about love. I really want kids to experience what I do when I listen to a Dylan record. He's an acquired taste, but once you get it there's nothing in the world that is better or that you'd rather have.

Dead Boys, Gorilla Biscuits, Against Me! to perform at CBGB's this August

SaveCBGB.org has announced a series of shows in honor of the legendary CBGB's nightclub. Among the band scheduled to play this August are 70s punk legends the Dead Boys, and performances by Gorilla Biscuits, and Circle Jerks as well as newer acts like Against Me! and Thursday. The goal of the performances is to help generate support and momentum hopefully leading to a renewed lease. The legendary NYC club which played home to bands like the Ramones, Patti Smith, Blondie, Television and literally hundreds of others artists through the years may be forced to close its doors. The situation arose due to a dispute with Bowery Residents Committee which holds a 45-year lease on the building. CBGB's is their lone commercial tenant; their rent feud dates back five years, when the committee went to court to collect more than $300,000 in back rent from the club. The Bowery Residents Committee which is 75% funded by the city of New York has listed the property on the Real Estate MLS for anyone else who wishes to rent 313 and 315 Bowery.

New signings and new management at Martyr Records

Jay Reason of Stillborn Records and The Distance has taken over management of hardcore label, Martyr. The label recently produced releases from Modern Life is War and a split featuring With Honor / the Distance. As first order of business, Reason has announced the signing of two bands. The first

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Headlines

Burning Heart signs the Accidents

Break Ups: Anodyne (1997-2005)

Break Ups: The James Dean Trio (2003-2005)

Break Ups: Sommerset (1995-2005)

Cheap Sex touring this summer

Break Ups: Pipedown (1997-2005)

Common Cloud signs Braille

Staring Back signs to Takeover

From Autumn To Ashes drops off Sounds of the Underground tour; back on the road in August

Chunksaah to release J.Church/Plungers split

Break Ups: Paint the Town Red (2001-2005)

Fueled By Ramen/Decaydance signs The Hush Sound

Southcott signs to Less Avenged

Break Ups: Razor Crusade (2002-2005)

Think Fast! Records to release upcoming EP from The Distance

The Ratchets lose and replace drummer, touring this summer

Feeding Frenzy signs Ten Count; new record from Daggermouth this Fall

Upcoming Asian Man releases include Riverdales reissues

Zao parts with drummer, working on new album and DVD

Lucky Boys Confusion to release rarities compilation, touring

Thorp signs Holland's Discipline

Anti-Flag, Against Me!, and The Transplants join Green Day, Jimmy Eat World on upcoming tour

Catch 22 added to Reel Big Fish Coast-To-Coast Roast Tour

Bridge Nine signs No Turning Back

xbxrx signs to Polyvinyl

The Misfits and Nutley Brass to release Fiend Club Lounge

Nintendo Fusion Tour to feature Fall Out Boy, the Starting Line, Motion City Soundtrack, more

Negative Progression signs Aberdien

Epitaph to release Day Of Contempt EP in August

Rhino to release expanded versions of first two Stooges records

Amy Griffin joins Darkbuster

End Records signs Red Animal War

Rhino preparing 100-song Ramones set

Abacus to release Turbonegro's 'Party Animals' in North America

The Kite-Eating Tree writing for new record

Bands on TV - week of 6/20/05

Teenage Bottlerocket touring with Groovie Ghoulies, Teenage Harlets and others

The Mag Seven signs to End Records

Three One G posts Head Wound City MP3

is Connecticut-based Brothers in Arms which is described as a "fast, melodic and heavy hardcore band" and draws comparisons to "Shai Hulud, Misery Signals, American Nightmare and Bane" The band is currently prepping their Martyr debut for an October release and you can check out some material from the band on their myspace page. The second act is also from Connecticut, posthardcore act These Green Eyes. The band describes themselves simply as a "five [piece] rock band with emo/hardcore influences." They also expect to see the release of their Martyr debut in October. Some material from the band is available here. In related news, Palehorse who signed to the label in February have set a August 23rd release date for their upcoming full length.

The Militia Group signs Israel's Man Alive

The Militia Group has signed Israeli punk act, Man Alive. The band recently appeared in the film Jericho's Echo and will release their debut, Open Surgery on September 6th. The band is described as "catchy and energetic music is inspired by bands like Face to Face.

Dischord says Nike stole Minor Threat artwork

According to this story, multi-billion dollar shoemaker, Nike has stolen the legendary artwork of hardcore pioneers, Minor Threat. Destined for a campaign called Major Threat, the style and iconic imagery was used for the advertising and done so without the permission of Washington, D.C. based indie Dischord. The label owns the copyright on both the recording and artwork. The label had this to say with regards to permission: "Many people have now noticed that Nike has appropriated the Minor Threat artwork and logo for a new skateboard demo / ad campaign. To set the record straight – Nike never contacted Dischord to obtain permission to use this imagery, nor was any permission granted. Simply put, Nike stole it and we're not happy about it. We are not yet sure what options, if any, we have to stop Nike from using our images to sell their shoes, but if you would like to direct your complaints to Nike that would be a good place to start. To longtime fans and supporters of Minor Threat and Dischord this must seem like just another familiar example of mainstream corporations attempting to assimilate underground culture to turn a buck. However it is more disheartening to us to think that Nike may be successful in using this imagery to fool kids, just beginning to becoming familiar with skate culture, underground music and DIY ideals, into thinking that the general ethos of this label, and Minor Threat in particular, can somehow be linked to Nike's mission. In any regard, we would like to thank the many people who have written to us in the last several days to express their outrage, support and encouragement." We asked attorney and pastepunk.com editor Jordan Baker if he could give us some of his insight into the situation. Jordan had this to say: "Among the intellectual property rights that are at issue I think it's very clear that Nike has made a derivative work out of Minor Threat's copyright in its cover art. Nike might argue that this is a parody, but I fail to see what kind of social commentary Nike is trying to make in its graphic in relation to the original Minor Threat art, and generally parody is no defense for this kind of commercial appropriation." (Keep in mind that this is not legal advice and that you should consult a lawyer if you want professional assurance that the information, and your interpretation of it, is appropriate to your particular situation.) Nike eventually responded to a request for comment by Punknews.org. The company issued this statement: "Nike Skateboarding sincerely apologizes for the creation of a tour poster inspired by Minor Threat's album cover. Despite rumors being circulated, Wieden & Kennedy and Odopod had nothing to do with the creation of this tour poster and should not be held accountable. To set the record straight, Nike Skateboarding's "Major Threat" Tour poster was designed, executed and promoted by skateboarders, for skateboarders. All of the Nike employees responsible for the creation of the tour flyer are fans of both Minor Threat and Dischord records and have nothing but respect for both." Minor Threat's music and iconographic album cover have been an inspiration to countless skateboarders since the album came out in 1984. And for the members of the Nike Skateboarding staff, this is no different. Because of the album's strong imagery and because our East Coast tour ends in Washington DC, we felt that it was a perfect fit. This was a poor judgment call and should not have been executed without consulting Minor Threat and Dischord Records. We apologize for any problems this may have caused, and want to make very clear that we have no relationship with the members of Minor Threat, Dischord Records and they have not endorsed our products. Every effort has been made to remove and dispose of all flyers (both print and digital). Again, Nike Skateboarding sincerely apologizes to Minor Threat and Dischord Records. – Sincerely, Nike Skateboarding"



Fat's upcoming releases: Propagandhi, Screeching Weasel collection and more

Fat Wreck Chords recently posted an update on their release schedule. Of particular note is a title and release date for the long awaited new Propagandhi full length. From their website: On August 23rd we have The Real McKenzies 10,000 Shots and Rise Against's The Unraveling re-mixed and with bonus tracks. Up next there's Against Me! with their second Fat full length, Searching For A Former Clarity, which comes out September 6th. In October we're looking forward to a Screeching Weasel collection, a compilation to benefit Protect.org, a full length from Western Addiction, and get this, a new Propagandhi record entitled Potemkin City Limits. You heard it here first! We're told that the album is

being mixed in Chris Hannah's very own bedroom, and past experience tells us that anything going on in that bedroom usually takes about 3 or 4 minutes, so we'll be WAY ahead of schedule. That is great news! Then finally in November we close out the year with a new full length from Lagwagon. Wow. Now what the fuck was all that about a crystal ball.

Matt Freeman health update

Hellcat / Epitaph has posted an update on the current health of Rancid bassist Matt Freeman. The label commented that "Your concern is deeply appreciated and here is the official word on the status of Matt at present": Matt Freeman recently underwent a successful surgery and his doctors have determined that his condition is not terminal. Matt is now home and recovering well. Matt and Rancid would like to thank everyone for their thoughts, love and prayers. Rumors of health problems arose when Freeman's condition prevented him from joining the Transplants on this summer's Warped Tour.

Gang of Four details on re-recorded material

As a follow up to earlier reports, Gang of Four has announced the track listing and release date of their upcoming compilation of re-recorded tracks. The band recently reissued their 1979 debut, Entertainment! which also included the Yellow EP and four previously unreleased recordings. "The reunited post-punk quartet signed to V2 back in April and the label will be issuing Whitey's Gift on September 20th. The record will compromise entirely of re-recordings of their songs, and a special UK edition will include a bonus disc with remixes and covers performed by Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Ladytron, Hot Hot Heat, the Dandy Warhols, the Others, Amusement Parks on Fire, Faultline, the Rakes, Phones, Go Home Productions, and Tony Kanal of No Doubt. The bonus disc will be released separately in the US in October."

The Militia Group signs Let Go (ex-Stereo)

The Militia Group has signed Tempe, Arizona's Let Go. The band features vocalist/guitarist Jamie Woolford of defunct act The Stereo and Animal Chin, as well as his Stereo bandmate Chris Serafini and drummer Scott Hessel. Wollford had originally posted some solo material which eventually went on to form material for the new band and a number of the resulting full band tracks have been posted on their myspace and purevolume sites and are aiming for a October 3rd release of their self-titled Militia debut. The Stereo released Rewind + Record in 2002 before calling it a day.

Danzig announces Blackest of the Black Tour with Misfits set at each stop

Glenn Danzig has announced plans for the 2005 Blackest of the Black Tour. The tour will include headliners Danzig, as well as hardcore and black metal acts including Chimaira, Behemoth, Himsa, Mortiis (ex-Emperor), and The Agony Scene. Of some note is that each stop on the tour will feature a 30-minute Misfits set with Doyle von Frankenstein. Doyle previously joined Glenn for similar sets last fall. The festival debuted in the Summer of 2003 with Danzig, Superjoint Ritual, Opeth, Nile, Lacuna Coil and Behemoth. Dates for the 2005 edition are expected shortly.

More on Institute (ex-Bush, Civ, Helmet, Chamberlain)

Some more information has surfaced about the upcoming debut from Institute, the project from former Bush frontman, Gavin Rossdale . The band includes former Helmet/ Orange 9mm guitarist Chris Traynor; bassist Cache "Utah Slim" Tolman, formerly of Civ, Rival Schools and "exploratory jazz metalloids" Iceburn; and drummer Charlie Walker (Chamberlain, Split Lip). For the recording, Josh Freese performed all the drum tracks. Besides the launch of a fairly minimal website, the band has posted a portion of a track which can be heard here "Bullet-Proof Skin" taken from Distort Yourself which is due out September 13th.

Work resumes on "What We Do Is Secret"; Germs biopic

On July 15th, work began on the Rhino Films production of What We Do Is Secret in Los Angeles. The film was written and directed by Rodger Grossman and an early "teaser" trailer has been released and can be found here. The film was delayed indefinitely according to reports that surfaced a year ago, but work has apparently resumed.

GBH returns to the US; DVDs and album planned

Besides their previously announced US Tour this summer, long-running UK punk act GBH has announced a number of new releases for 2005. The band, which began in 1979 most recently released the full length studio record Ha Ha and is currently working on material for a new record, with "3/4 of the writing completed." Besides the new full length, the band plans to release a live DVD recorded at the Sonic Mania Festival in Tokyo, Japan in 2004.. This is the second live DVD in the past year, with Charged GBH - On Stage City Baby Attacked By Rats released recently. The band also compiled a 50 track anthology titled Dead On Arrival for Sanctuary.

Let It Burn (2000-2005)

Chunksaah Records' New Jersey-based punk act Let It Burn has called it a day. Vocalist/guitarist DJ Values posted the following on their myspace page: "So yes the rumors are true, after 4 years and over 300 shows in 17 countries, Let It Burn will be calling it quits. We are just as upset as you are, but the time was right. It was a decision that we all came to while on tour this month and we feel it is the right one to make. I could go on for hours about all the great experiences we have had and all the amazing, and sometimes not-so amazing people we have met over the years, especially Pete and I. This has been the most marvelous time of my life and a time I will and never forget, for that I thank each and every person who supported us or showed us love in anyway." The band most recently released The Expanding Universe and before that a split with The Break and Hello Good Friend on Alone.

Doghouse to release Bob Dylan tribute this winter

According to sources, like Drive-Thru's similar project, Toledo, Ohio-based Doghouse Records is currently prepping a tribute to folk icon Bob Dylan. The record will be titled Paupers, Peasants, Princes and Kings and is expected in October or November. The disc is set to include a reunion of former Chamberlain lead singer David Moore and guitarist Adam Rubenstein on the Dylan rarity "Abandoned Love." Also scheduled is a version of "Lay Lady Lay" performed by Sparta/At the Drive-In veteran Jim Ward, and a cover of "The Man in Me" as performed by Say Anything. Also participating on the disc are the Honorary Title with a version of "Simple Twist of Fate" and rapper P.O.S. performing "All Along the Watchtower." Other acts tentatively scheduled to appear are Limbeck, Read Yellow, Apollo Sunshine and Panama Jerk; which features Blood Brothers guitarist Cody Votolato and Some Girls/Give Up The Ghost vocalist Wes Eisold.

Pig Destroyer update; upcoming splits, touring and collaboration with Zombi

Grindcore act Pig Destroyer has posted an update on their plans for the next few month. The band is currently taking some time to work on new material for splits with Ipecac's Orthrelm, the Black Dahlia Murder, Rotten Sound and Premonitions of War. Also in the works is a collaboration with Relapse labelmates Zombi under the moniker Zombi Destroyer. Besides their previously announced set on Hellfest, the band is currently booking a series of Southern California dates with Uphill Battle, Triac and Phobia. The band released their sophmore release, Terrifyer last year. Update: The dates for the tour are now available. You can click Read More for those.

Q and Not U (1998-2005)

The members of Dischord act, Q and Not U have disbanded. The band posted a statement on their website today: "After seven years, hundreds of shows, thousands of miles, 46 states, four continents, three albums, only one flat-tire and countless nicknames for Shawn Brackbill, Q and Not U is disbanding. With all of your support, we feel that we've reached all of our shared goals as Q and Not U and we're ready to move on to other projects in life. We all hope to play music together again someday, but we feel that it's a beautiful and natural time to bring this band to a close." The band had released three full lengths on Dischord, the first No Kill No Beep Beep in 2000, followed by Different Damage two years later and most recently last year's Power. They still have a handful of shows scheduled. Among them are festival performances in the summer and two hometown farewell shows in September.

France honors Patti Smith

Patti Smith has received a top cultural honor in France. The influential 58 year old punk poet was presented with the insignia of Commander of the Order of the Arts and Letters by Culture Minister Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres. A statement from the ministry noted Smith's appreciation for 19th century French poet Arthur Rimbaud and praised her as "one of the most influential artists in women's rock 'n' roll." Smith, who was presented with the award at an AIDS benefit concert in Paris, commented to the Associated Press "I have vowed to live up to this honor in my work and my conduct. I can't explain what I feel like. It has uplifted me, and I will work very hard to earn it."

August/September 2005 Release Schedule

RELEASE DATE	ARTIST	TITLE	RECORD LABEL
8/1/05	Devil Sold His Soul	Darkness Prevails	Visible Noise
8/2/05	Before Braille	Tired Of Not Being Away From Here	You And Whose Army?
8/2/05	Braille	Thin Cities	Common Cloud
8/2/05	Emery	The Question	Tooth & Nail
8/2/05	Houston Calls	A Collection Of Short Stories	Rushmore
8/2/05	Lorene Drive	Romantic Wealth	Lobster
8/2/05	Madball	Legacy	Ferret
8/2/05	Various	Give 'Em The Boot	Hellcat
8/6/05	Post Office Gals, The	Esbeohdes	On The Rise
8/8/05	J Church/The Plungers	split	Chunksaah
8/8/05	My Awesome Compilation	Actions	Sorepoint
8/9/05	Day Of Contempt	The Will To Live	Epitaph
8/9/05	Dead Hearts	No Love No Hope	Reflections
8/9/05	Doomriders	Black Thunder	Deathwish Inc.
8/9/05	Drowningman	Don't Push Us While We're Hot	Thorp
8/9/05	Early November, The	tba	Drive-Thru
8/9/05	Junction 18	tba	Fearless
8/9/05	June	If You Speak Any Faster	Victory
8/9/05	Koufax	Hard Times Are In Fashion	Doghouse
8/9/05	Limbeck	Let Me Come Home	Doghouse
8/9/05	Lines Into Phoenix	Aries	Less Avenged
8/9/05	Lords	Swords	Jade Tree
8/9/05	Nural	The Weight Of The World	Hopeless
8/9/05	Pennywise	The Fuse	Epitaph
8/9/05	Silverstein	Discovering The Waterfront	Victory
8/9/05	Somerset	Pandora	Punknews
8/9/05	Suicide Machines	War Profiteering Is Killing Us All!	Side One Dummy
8/9/05	Various	Deep Elm Sampler No. 6: The New Crazy	Deep Elm
8/15/05	Aiden	Nightmare Anatomy	Victory
8/16/05	A Wilhelm Scream	Ruiner	Nitro
8/16/05	Banner, The	Each Breath Haunted	Ferret
8/16/05	Bedlight For Blueeyes	The Dawn	Trustkill
8/16/05	Fall Of Troy, The	Doppelganger	Equal Vision
8/16/05	Her Candane	tba	United Edge
8/16/05	Ramones	Weird Tales of the Ramones	Rhino
8/16/05	Various	Bob Dylan Tribute	Drive-Thru
8/19/05	Latterman	No Matter Where We Go...!	Deep Elm
8/22/05	Face Tomorrow (Ni)	03-02-05	Reflections
8/22/05	Special Goodness, The	tba	Epitaph
8/23/05	Allegiance	Overlooked	Rivalry
8/23/05	Bayside (US)	S/T	Victory
8/23/05	Bled, The	Found In The Flood	Vagrant
8/23/05	Bullet for My Valentine	Hand of Blood	Trustkill
8/23/05	Calico System	They Live	Eulogy / Alveran

RELEASE DATE	ARTIST	TITLE	RECORD LABEL
8/23/05	Criteria	When We Break	Saddle Creek
8/23/05	Curl Up and Die	One Above All, The End Of All That Is	Revelation
8/23/05	Every Time I Die	Gutter Phenomenon	Ferret
8/23/05	Go It Alone	The Only Blood Between Us	Rivalry
8/23/05	Gogol Bordello	Gypsy Punks: Underdog World Strike	Side One Dummy
8/23/05	Mad Sin	Sweet & Innocent?...Loud & dirty!!	Thorp
8/23/05	Mike Park	North Hangook Falling	Asian Man
8/23/05	Minus The Bear	Menos El Oso	Suicide Squeeze
8/23/05	Orange	Welcome To The World of Orange	Hellcat
8/23/05	Pale Pacific, The	Urgency	Sidecho
8/23/05	Palehorse	Secrets Within Secrets	Martyr
8/23/05	Real McKenzies	10,000 Shots	Fat Wreck Chords
8/23/05	Rise Against	The Unraveling	Fat Wreck Chords
8/23/05	Turbonegro	Party Animals	Abacus
8/26/05	Turmoil	Staring Back	Abacus
8/29/05	Between The Buried And Me	Alaska	Victory
8/30/05	Death Cab For Cutie	Plans	Atlantic
8/30/05	Facing New York	Facing New York	Five One, Inc.
8/30/05	From Autumn to Ashes	Abandon Your Friends	Vagrant
8/30/05	Vendetta Red	Sisters Of The Red Death	Epic
9/5/05	Robocop Kraus	Who Do They Think They Are	Epitaph
9/6/05	Against Me!	Searching For A Former Clarity	Fat Wreck Chords
9/6/05	Darlington	Sex	Fastmusic
9/6/05	Lye By Mistake	Arrangements For Fulminating Vective	United Edge
9/6/05	Maida	Renaissance In Reverse	Fiddler
9/6/05	Man Alive	Open Surgery	Militia Group
9/6/05	Socratic	All We Are Is Lunch for the Sky	Drive-Thru
9/12/05	Fallout Theory, The	So Happy You're Not Here	Lockjaw
9/13/05	Anatomy Of A Ghost	tba	Fearless
9/13/05	Bomb, The	Indecision	Thick
9/13/05	Elliott	Photorecording	Revelation
9/13/05	Go Betty Go	Nothing Is More	Side One Dummy
9/13/05	Halifax	The Inevitability Of A Strange World	Drive-Thru
9/13/05	HorrorPops, The	Bring It On!	Hellcat
9/13/05	Stretch Arm Strong	Free At Last	We Put Out
9/13/05	The Ex	Singles. Period	Touch and Go
9/15/05	U.SeeD	The Black Ink	Freedumb
9/19/05	Flatliners, The	Destroy To Create	Stomp (Union Label)
9/20/05	Coheed and Cambria	Good Apollo, I'm Burning Star V - Volume One...	Equal Vision
9/21/05	Various	The Killer In You: A Tribute To Smashing Pumpkins	Reignition
9/27/05	Grace Gale	A Few Easy Steps To Secure Heli-camel Safety	Blackout!
9/27/05	I Am The Avalanche	tba	Drive-Thru
9/27/05	New Black	Time Attack	Thick
9/27/05	Ramallah	Kill A Celebrity	Thorp
9/27/05	Renee Heartfelt	Death of the Ghost	Textbook Music
9/27/05	Thrice	Vheissu	Island

Our Lawyer Made Us Change The Name Of This Article So We Wouldn't Get Sued. (But **FALL OUT BOY** Are Still Totally Awesome)

Interview By Tristan Staddon /Live Photography By Dan Boczarski (www.danboczarski.com)

To tell you the truth, something about Fall Out Boy never used worked for me. I was, admittedly, a bit of a latecomer to their coming out party, but even once I became well acquainted with their particularly precipitous brand of pop-punk, I still couldn't care much what all the fuss was about. Then when that fuss started foaming from my every friend's mouth [not just kids here either; I'm talking full-fledged adults], it all became a little too much. Sure, all the references were pretty cheeky, the hooks strong enough to snare a beluga and apparently their live show was completely off the apeshit. But it still didn't really resonate with me.



So let Fall Out Boy have their soaring choruses, magazine covers and children's novels, I decided. I'd be just fine spending my afternoons eating pop-tarts with my hands and settling down for the night by brushing the crumbs out of my chest hair. Things were going to be alright.

Then I heard From Under The Cork Tree and, you guessed it, those were my hindquarters flying positively clear over my, uh, teakettle. Whip-smart and conscious of its genre's shortcomings, Fall Out Boy's latest is as catchy as cholera on a cold Chicago morning. And unlike, say, Sammy Sosa, you can bet these boys didn't use any corked bats making their hits.

Oh, and as it happens Pete Wentz is a pretty nice guy, too. Considering he's currently a bassist/lyricist/author who runs a clothing company [Clandestine Industries] and a new record imprint [Decaydance], and was still getting over some nasty flu symptoms at the time of our little talk, he had more than a few better things to be doing than chatting with me about why I can't stop listening to the record he just made. Here's what we talked about:

You guys are back in your home state right now on the Fueled By Ramen & Friends Tour. For a lot of people, the songs you'll be debuting on this tour will be the first time they've heard them. How are audiences responding to it so far?

It's going well so far. We're only playing a couple of new songs every night because, like you say, a lot of people don't know them yet, so it's still a lot of the older stuff. But that's alright and kids have been really responsive so far. I think we're doing probably about the best we've ever done right now. These are places we used to play and it'd only be full to partial capacity, but now these rooms are totally full, so that's been really cool. It's been good too, because a lot of the kids coming out and saying hi to us are saying that this is their second or third time seeing us, and that's what we want to do. It's cool to have new people coming out, but what we really want to do is let the kids who have been into us from the start grow up with us.

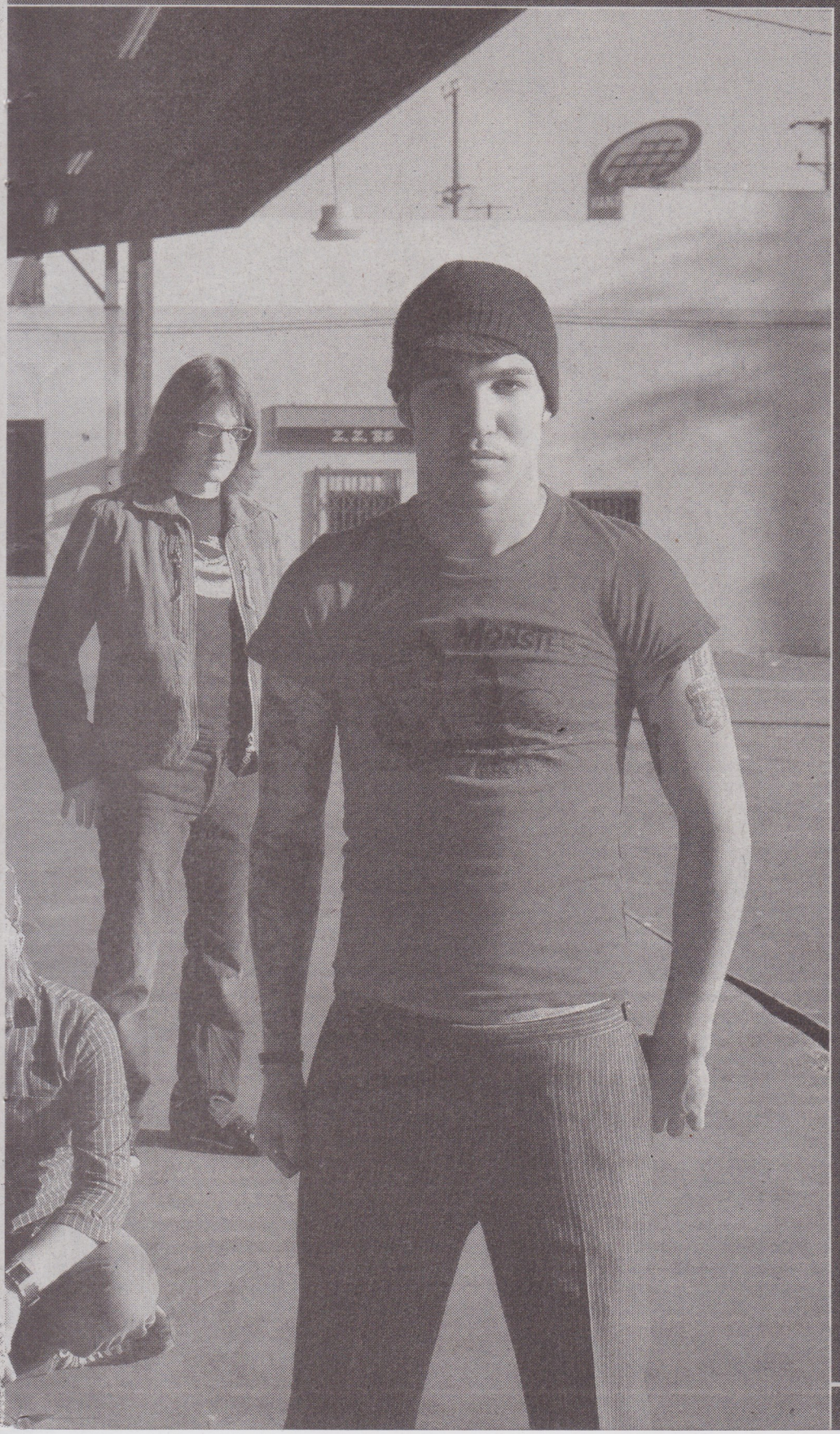
I've read you say that before, that it's important to you guys that your current fan base grows along with you rather than simply trying to appeal constantly to newer, younger people. You guys have obviously grown up really quickly as a band and, while that's been going on, pretty quickly as human beings, too. How did that affect this record?

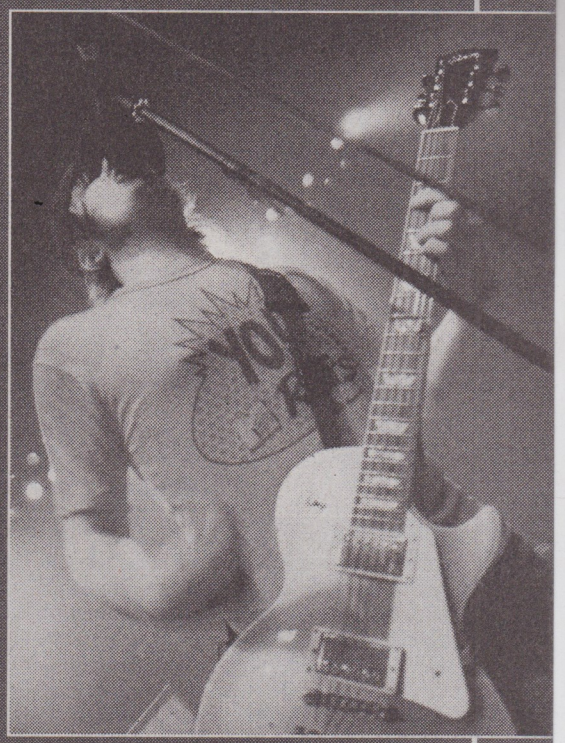
It affects everything really, but I can't sit here and say it's just that. This record, just like all of us, has really been affected by the world we live in. I've realized over the past couple of years that the world's an ugly place right now. If you're not at least a little bit depressed about the world right now, then you're probably not paying attention to what's going on around you. We've got a guy running the country who shouldn't ever be in charge of anything, we just had the tsunami happen and everything... and there's so much more that I've seen – that we've all

seen – that's really fucking depressing. So I almost feel like this record is bigger than us, because so much of it has to do with the state of the world we're living in. It isn't a political record, but it is influenced by politics and political decisions – because we are. It's also just about the things we do to each other and let happen while we watch. You know, we've been all over the world over the last couple of years and you see a lot of shit when you do that.

It is a pretty crazy world you guys have been thrust into. Day-to-day, how different is it to navigate the kind of world you're in now compared to the one you were in four years ago?

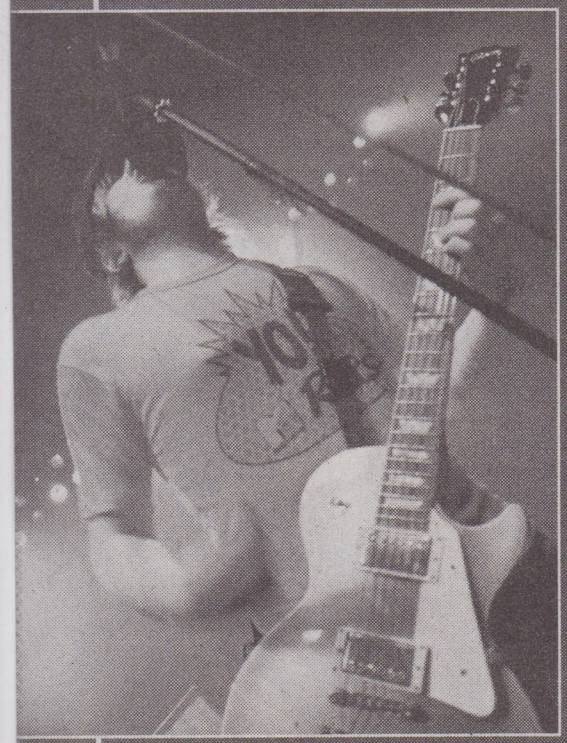
Day-to-day, it's not that different. We still sleep until noon – well, sometimes anyway – get up and play a show almost every day. You only really notice the difference when you step back and realize how fast this whole thing is moving. Sometimes along the road it has honestly felt like a runaway train, going along at some ridiculous miles-per-hour without a driver. It really feels like one false move and it could all fall apart anytime. We've just held on and trusted that everything would work out alright in the end and so far it's doing that. Deep down, I still feel like the same person I was four years ago – I feel like I can still see the same person inside of myself that I was – and I'm just going to keep on being myself. Writing this record was tough on me, though. It really took a lot out of me – it felt like it almost killed me. I don't think any of the other guys had any idea – well, maybe Patrick [Stump, vocalist/guitarist] knew a little – but it was really rough on me at times.

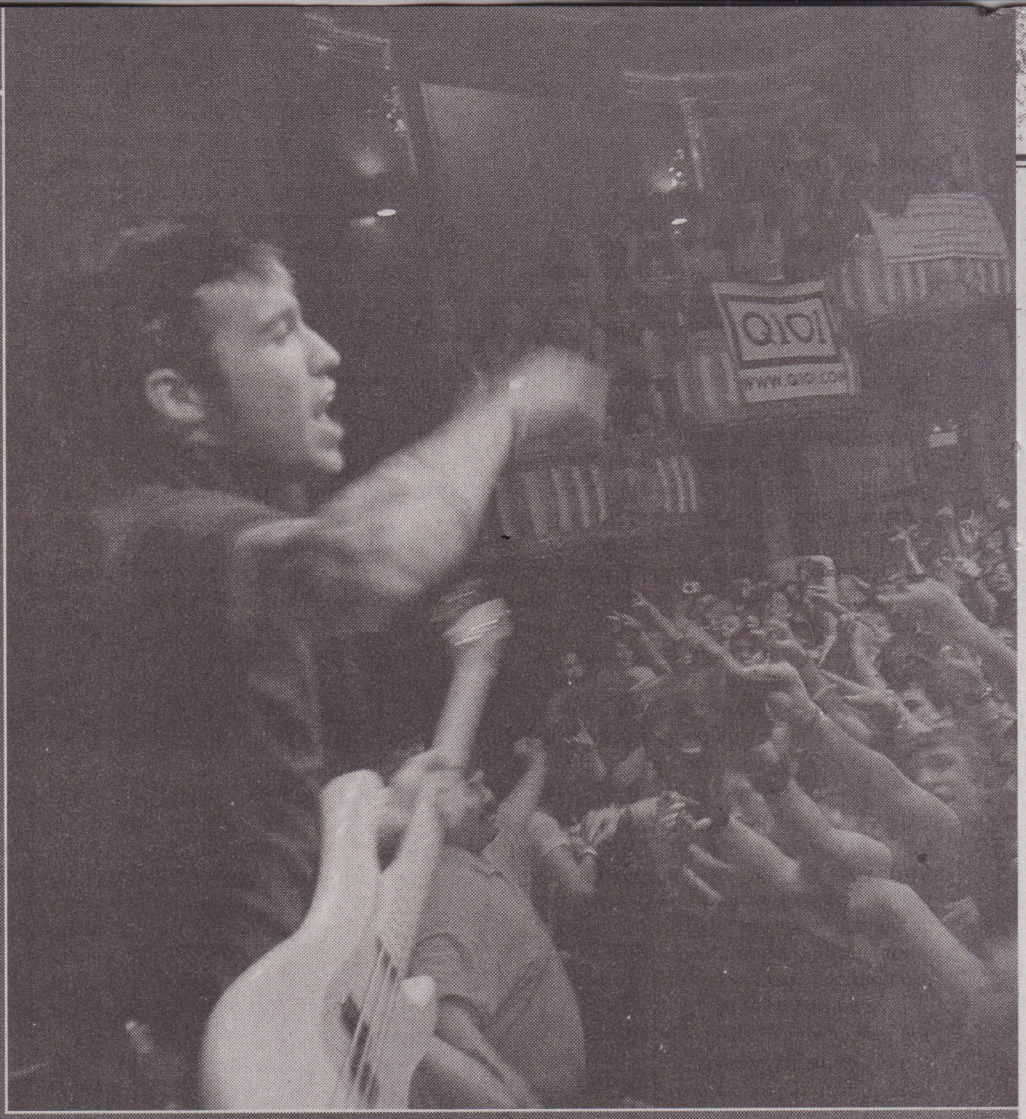




Do you think that over the past couple of years, as your profile's been raised, and there's been less accountability from people spreading information about you, it's become easier for people who don't know you to have misperceptions about you or the band?

Well, yeah it has. A lot of our success – especially our early success – came from websites and downloading sites like PureVolume and MySpace. So, I guess you live by the Internet, you die





by the Internet. It's sort of a weird thing, because we are an Internet band. Not that long ago, that would've been unheard of for a band to make the kinds of jumps we've made just from touring and the Internet. So, I guess along with that, you've got to ready yourself for the other side of what the Internet can do. We weren't ready for it at all at first, but now that we've had more than our share of stuff made up about us and said or whatever, I guess we're sort of used to it. But it can get pretty unnerving sometimes for sure.

Looking at From Under The Cork Tree, Pete, one of most noticeable differences is the change behind the boards - you guys decided to work with [producer] Neal Avron (A New Found Glory, Everclear) out in L.A. That must've been quite an experience. C'mon and relive the whole thing for me.

Neil was really good. He brought a lot of experience to the table – certainly more than we had ever worked with before. And as far as helping us through this whole "major label debut" thing and the pressures of working under expectations, he was a great help. But L.A. is a scary place, man. I felt like an alien being out there. The weather's funny – nice, but weird – and everybody's so blonde. And then set against that there's all of this ugliness. It was just such a weird place and it really didn't help the kind of stuff that I was going through when I was writing. It was seriously pretty rough. But I got through it and Patrick and I worked hard to put this whole thing together. It's just so hard when the words mean so much to me – they're really all I have, and I want them to be perfect. Ultimately though, I have to realize that's not ever going to be possible, so you just realize that an album's a snapshot of where you are at one moment. The way Patrick and I work I don't think I can explain logically to anyone. I don't know what it is, or how it happens – and if someone told me that, I wouldn't believe them - but it works for us. There's some, like, magic or something between us that I've never had with anyone else. It's impossible for me to describe, but it's pretty incredible.

I know you had hoped to have a couple of guests appear on this record and you did get [A New Found Glory's] Chad Gilbert. Tell me what he did when you had the tapes flown over to him.

We sent the tapes off and told him, you know, that we wanted him to lay down some heavier-style screams for the song "I Slept With Someone In Fall Out Boy and All I Got Was This Stupid Song Written About Me." Basically, we sent him the tapes and he did it in like one take, or one day at least, and sent them right back. That was pretty awesome.

I've also read you had hoped to get Justin Pierre from Motion City Soundtrack. Did that one work out?

No, it didn't. It was just a matter of scheduling and we had a conflict where they were recording for their new album and it just wouldn't have gotten done in time. That was too bad, because it would've been really cool – those guys are good friends of ours. We did, though, get William Beckett, our friend from The Academy Is... and then another guy, Brendan Urie from this new band called Panic! At The Disco. Have you heard of them?

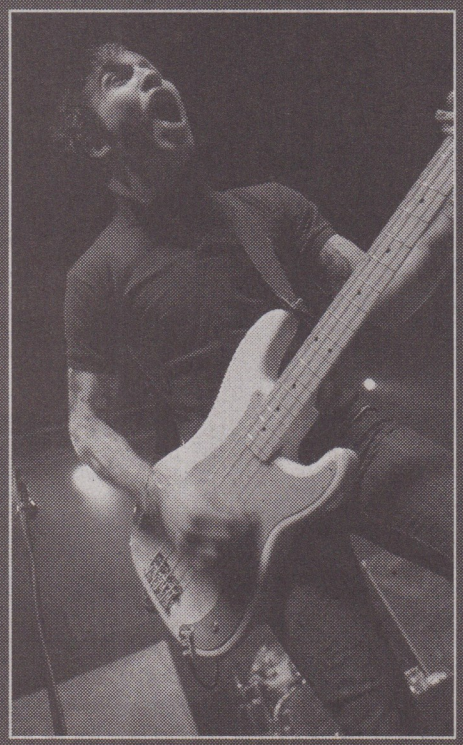
Yeah, one of our mutual friends, Scott Nagelberg from Crush, introduced me to them not too long ago.

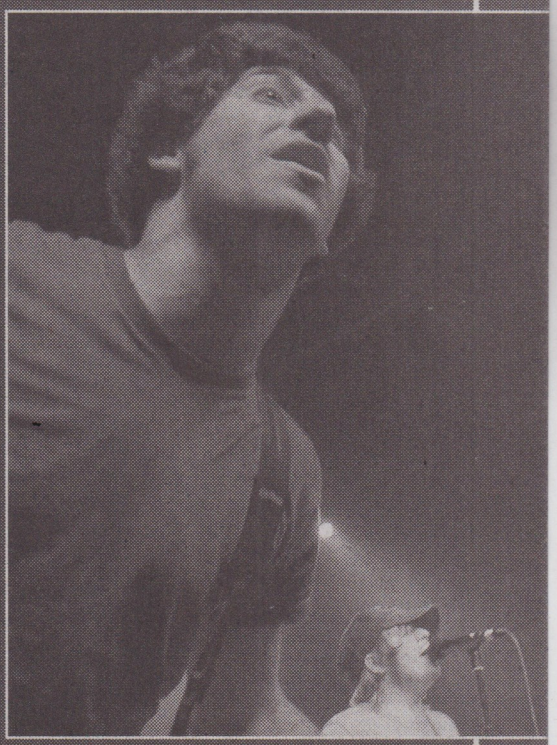
Yeah, so Brendan's on there, too. He's a sweet guy, so that was a lot of fun. Those guys are going to be really good.

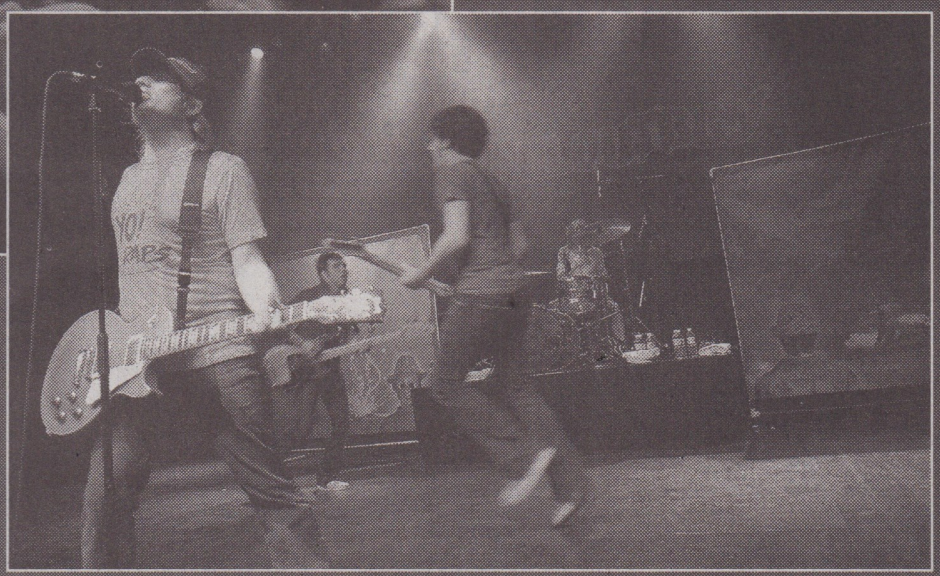
Something I found most interesting about this album is that, even recently, you were saying that "Hand Of God" was one of your favorite songs to play live. Now I've read that you're not even deeming it good enough to be on the record?

Well, you're right – it isn't on the record. But it wasn't really that we didn't think it wasn't good enough. It still is one of my









favorites to play. But because, again, of the world we live in, it wasn't o.k. to have a song with the word 'God' in it, and we didn't want to change it, so we just left it off.

So if you left that one off over the naming issue, to what can we attribute "Our Lawyer Made Us Change The Name Of This Song So We Wouldn't Get Sued?"
[Laughs]. Well, originally we were going to call that song "My Name Is David Ruffin and These Are the Temptations," but, well, you know the story behind that, right?

Yeah!
Yeah, so I guess David Ruffin heard about it and we were going to have to change the name of it. So, we just did it like that. I think it's pretty ridiculous, with everybody taking the names so seriously – especially with "Hand Of God." I think it's a great name and it's not anti-Bush or anything. It's just the right name for the song and we all like it, so it's just too bad.

It's too bad that that even has to be a factor.
Yeah, it is. It just goes to show that there are still a lot of stupid people in the world. I just think it's funny. It's like the ultimate business decision move, too, because if you put the word 'God' in the name of something then you'll get labelled as a Christian band, or it might be interpreted as against Christians in some way. It's just bizarre the way these things go – it's like some episode of the Twilight Zone. Everybody just wants the same thing all the time so that it's easy and nobody has to think.

Everybody's always interested in the great song titles. Among the notables I've heard rumored this time: well, we just confirmed "I Slept With Someone In Fall Out Boy and All I Got Was This Stupid Song Written About Me."
[Laughs]. Yep, that's definitely going to be on there.

"Sophomore Slump Or Comeback Of The Year."
Yeah, it's there for sure.

"Snitches and Talkers Get Snitches and Walkers."
No, actually it didn't make the cut. But we took that song and it sort of became another song called "A Little Less Sixteen Candles, A Little More 'Touch Me.'" Obviously Molly Ringwald gets a lot of attention for being such a big star in the 80s, but it's pretty funny to make a silly reference to Samantha Fox and that kind of porn-sex stuff. And we've also got "Nobody Puts Baby In The Corner" from the DVD/EP on here, too, and that's a reference to Dirty Dancing and Patrick Swayze. I like doing that kind of stuff with the names, you know what I mean? They're just these little things about our generation that I like to attach on that give it that little extra meaning.

And if there's one thing America needs right now, it might be more Patrick Swayze.
Exactly, yeah!

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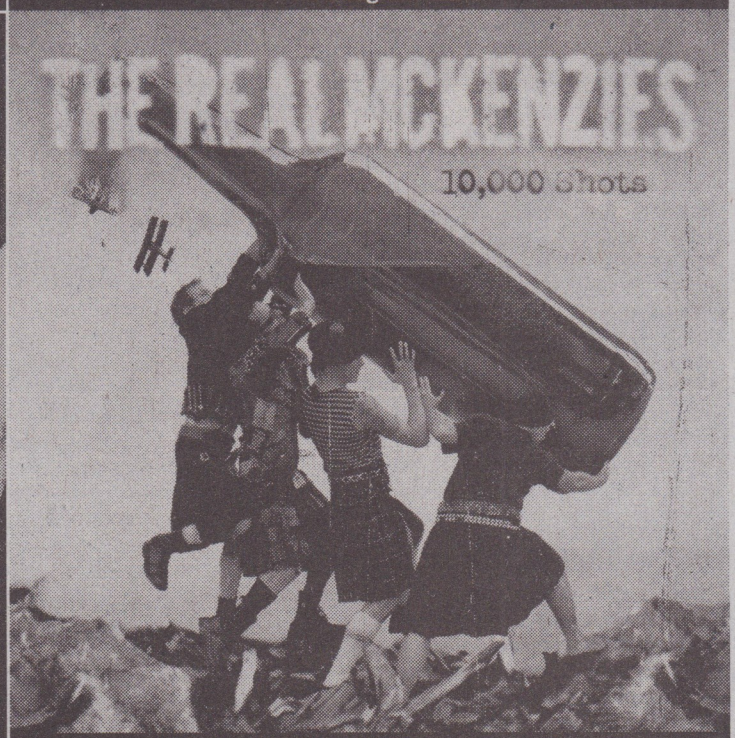
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NO TRIGGER

Interview with singer Tom Rheault

By Matt Cote

After years of cutting their teeth on local shows and self-released EPs, Massachusetts's NO TRIGGER is ready to make their mark on the punk rock scene in the coming year. Recently signing to powerhouse Nitro Records, a label in the midst of redefining itself with a slew of great signings (NT, THE LETTERS ORGANIZE, BULLET TRAIN TO VEGAS), these young lads play powerful, fast, and hard punk rock, in the vein of STRIKE ANYWHERE, KID DYNAMITE, and fellow label mates A WILHELM SCREAM. Coupling with their explosive music is their thoughtful, passionate, and sometimes overtly political lyrics, proving once again that young bands in this scene are in tune with the world around them. Using this year to prepare for their upcoming 2006 Nitro debut, look out for NO TRIGGER. Jump on this bandwagon now while there's still plenty of room!

So NO TRIGGER probably isn't a band that everyone is familiar with. Yet. So how would you describe your sound?
WHAT! No Trigger is unfamiliar?! Maybe you are right, AMP. I mean we haven't shaken hands with any presidents or anything, but surely our time will come. So chances are that if you are reading this you probably haven't heard us, so I'm here to help you out. We are a Massachusetts-based melodic punk / hardcore band with progressive lyrical stylings and some serious panache. If this is what you fancy, then you should check it out. Hard.

How did you guys get together? a
Hmmm. This is always a pretty boring story in our case, but basically two close-knit bands nearing their respective ends disbanded and formed one band with better goals and a new direction. We all fit together well and we went with it. And here we are.

You recently signed on with Nitro Records, home to an up-and-coming crop of talented punk rock bands like LETTERS ORGANIZE and A WILHELM SCREAM, and the one-time home of the legendary AFI. How did you manage to catch their ear?
Well, we were getting a bunch of offers from many different indie labels for a while and we were either careful or lazy and didn't jump at any of them. At the same time we have been good friends with A Wilhelm Scream for a while, and they casually whispered good things about us into the ears of Nitro at one point or another. We got some calls, made some plans, Nitro flew out to see us, bought us dinner, we did some thinking, and we joined on about a month later.

How has the experience with Nitro been to this point?
Phenomenal. They have the resources and the experience and it really shows. Nothing but good things about them so far. Send them your demo, kids.

So when should we expect to see your first Nitro release, and do you have any of the details worked out about recording yet, such as when, where, or who you'll be working with?
Yes, sir. Our full-length on Nitro will come out early in 2006. Our record will be produced and engineered by the mighty Bill Stevenson at the Blasting Room in Fort Collins, CO. We will be going into record the album in September. And yes, we are pretty friggin' pumped.

So your first EP was released last year, titled Extinction. in Stereo, on Bigmouth Japan. How would you say the sound of that release compares to the music you're currently writing?
Well... that album is a conglomeration of some newer material and some older material that the guys at Bigmouth really liked and wanted to put out on CD. We are proud of it all, but the newer material on that CD isn't far off from the direction we are going for this one. The melodic parts are catchier and the harder parts are harder, but it's definitely along the same lines. The production for this one will be a lot more focused and scrutinized since it will all be under the helm of a great producer this time around, too.

Do you guys have any plans for the road this year, to get your name out there before the new release comes?
Right now we are focusing on writing and playing out regionally up until we record, but after that... it doesn't look like we'll be stopping until we have to write our next CD.

Right now is a time where so many cookie-cutter bands are being thrust upon the scene, yet NO TRIGGER comes off as being a band that is sincere about their art and their music. What are your feelings on the state of the punk rock scene today?
You bring up a good point Matt, and even though I'm sure what I have to say about this party we call the punk scene won't be taken as gospel to many, I'm glad you asked. Personally, I almost want to believe that this cookie-cutter revolution of bands you speak of, and we all kind of know of whom you speak, has come and gone. It's in the past. Finito. I believe that right now labels are NOT signing those kinds of bands as much and the dawning of a new era of awesome bands is upon us. Of course there are exceptions, but for the most part what I have been seeing recently are bands with some serious talent and drive and originality being snatched up by the ones who USED to



sign the crap of the land. Examples? You got it. First off... FAT, who for a time would only sign well-known sure-shot bands, has recently signed the relatively completely unknown (yet extraordinary) SMOKE OR FIRE. FERRET, who has been stagnant for a while, signed the best NY-based punk/hardcore outfit ever, DEAD HEARTS. VICTORY, who has signed a good amount of swill in their day, got some brains and signed WITH HONOR and COMEBACK KID. And lastly our label NITRO, who has been known mainly for having a roster filled with 'goliaths' from the past, just recently singed a bunch of hard-working 'Davids' like THE LETTERS ORGANIZE, CRIME IN STEREO, ENEMY YOU, and NO TRIGGER. As far as I see it, things are really looking up at the moment in this underground mix of styles and sounds, but no matter what happens, at least some of the smaller bands who deserve a shot are getting their shot, because that was a lot harder to do in the past.

"FAT, who for a time would only sign well-known sure-shot bands, has recently signed the relatively completely unknown (yet extraordinary) SMOKE OR FIRE. FERRET, who has been stagnant for a while, signed the best NY-based punk/hardcore outfit ever, DEAD HEARTS. VICTORY, who has signed a good amount of swill in their day, got some brains and signed WITH HONOR and COMEBACK KID. And lastly our label NITRO, who has been known mainly for having a roster filled with 'goliaths' from the past, just recently singed a bunch of hard-working 'Davids' like THE LETTERS ORGANIZE, CRIME IN STEREO, ENEMY YOU, and NO TRIGGER."

What influences your band, both in terms of the music you write, and the lyrics you write?

Musically, our influences come from all over, mostly because we write songs as a group, and since each one of us is into slightly different stuff, we have different collective musical influences. When we write songs, we all get together and bring up ideas and then someone expands on them and then someone else expands on those, so at the end we all have some input on all the songs... and I'm sure that's how many bands might do it as well. As far as lyrics go though, I write over 90% of the lyrics, and what mainly influences me are issues that I feel strongly about that I don't see getting discussed enough in this type of music. For instance on our last record I wrote about the parallels between the fight for same sex marriage and the civil rights movement. My girlfriend's mother is a lesbian, and she and her partner are two of the kindest and most genuine and most loving people I've ever met. Yet they cannot get married because they live in Rhode Island, which is one of the 49 states that does not allow same-sex marriages. Why? Because some people get uncomfortable with the very thought of it? Because the bible says it's wrong? Because it doesn't conform with the normal view of "family"? Those are all pretty bogus reasons. Simply put, there is absolutely NO REASON why they should not be able to get married and get the same legally recognized union and benefits as other marriages. There is no room for any sort of opinion on the issue either, just as there should have been no room for opinion on whether black people had rights equal to those of whites. Its right and wrong, and 49 states right now are wrong. I mean I suppose I am proud that I live in the one state where same-sex marriages can occur, but at the same time it's pretty pitiful that the rest of the country is still at this level of ignorance and incongruence.

So you guys have managed to emerge from the local scene of central Massachusetts and get signed to a highly respected and publicized independent, which will undoubtedly bring with it many other great opportunities. What kind of goals have you guys set, as a band, and what do you expect from the band's future?

The goals are simple. Use this great opportunity to relay our music and our message to the world in the best way possible, and to have a shitload of fun while doing it.

Assuming that as soon as everyone reads this they're gonna want a piece of NO TRIGGER, where can someone go to get more information on you guys?

I suppose the best place to find out more about is our website, www.notrigger.org, because from there you can listen to our music and see our ugly mugs and so on. But you can also check out www.nitrorecords.com, and I'd even suggest checking out our drummer Mike's drum company at www.sjcdrums.com. Your favorite bands play that shit, and you should, too!



Metal/Hardcore News, Reviews & Interviews By Kirby Unrest

Death From Below

News & Updates

> Seattle's **HIMSA** have parted ways with guitarist **Matt Wicklund** and have replaced him with returning axeman **Sammi Curr**. **Curr**, a key member of the band for a number of years through the release of 2003's **"Courting Tragedy and Disaster"** album, will be back touring with the band on their **Dirty Black Summer Tour** beginning in Sacramento, CA. The **Dirty Black Summer Tour** featuring **HIMSA**, **THE AGONY SCENE**, **SCARS OF TOMORROW**, **FULL BLOWN CHAOS**, and **THE ESOTERIC**, will hit major and secondary markets all across the States, offering a low ticket price alternative to this summer's festivals. Fans can not only expect **Curr** at these upcoming **HIMSA** performances, but also a sneak preview of some of the band's brand new material from their upcoming album, **"Hail Horror"**, due out in early October on **Prosthetic Records**. **"Hail Horror"** was recorded at **Antfarm Studios** in Denmark with producer **Tue Madsen (THE HAUNTED, HEAVEN SHALL BURN)**. Artwork is being done by **Stephen Kasner (INTEGRITY, TREPHINE)**. Songtitles set to appear on the CD include **"I, Possession"**, **"They Speak In Swarms"**, **"Wolf Child"**, **"Seminal"**, **"Calling In Silent"**, **"Sleaze Evil"** and **"The Destroyer"**, which has recently been a mainstay at the band's live shows.



> Swedish thrashers **CARNAL FORGE** are currently working on the material for the follow-up to **"Aren't You Dead Yet?"**, tentatively due in early 2006 via **Century Media Records**. The upcoming CD will be the group's first with singer **Jens C. Mortensen (LEECH, REVOLVER, SLAPDASH)**, who replaced **Jonas Kjellgren** last year. "We have started to record some vocals to some of the new tracks," bassist **Lars Lindén** writes on the group's web site. "Our rehearsal place is slowly forming into a studio... that is nice. So making demos is a lot easier now. Tomorrow **Jens** and I are going up to Sala to work on some more stuff with the other guys."

> **MY RUIN** and **BLEED THE SKY** will be teaming up for the **Jagermeister**-sponsored **"Double Shot of Rock Tour"** beginning in July. The tour will begin with a string of West Coast dates, followed by a three-week U.S. tour, followed shortly by a two-month U.S. tour. Confirmed dates so far are as follows:

Aug. 06 - The Clubhouse - Tempe, AZ
Aug. 07 – Surges - El Paso, TX
Aug. 08 – TBA - Albuquerque, NM
Aug. 09 - Tokyo Joe's - Lubbock, TX
Aug. 10 – TBA - TX
Aug. 11 – TBA - Dallas, TX
Aug. 12 - The Purgatory - Oklahoma City, OK
Aug. 13 - The Hurricane - Kansas City, MO
Aug. 14 - The Lewis Bowl - Sioux City, IA
Aug. 15 – TBA - NE
Aug. 16 - Jester's Theatre - Longmont, CO
Aug. 17 - The Launchpad - Albuquerque, NM
Aug. 18 – Coconuts - Tucson, AZ
Aug. 19 - Brick By Brick - San Diego, CA
Aug. 20 - El Dorado - Lancaster, CA
Aug. 21 – TBA - Las Vegas, NV
Aug. 22 – TBA - Reno, NV
Aug. 23 – TBA - Northern CA
Aug. 24 - The Fat Cat's - Modesto, CA
Aug. 25 - Blake's on Telegraph - Berkeley, CA
Aug. 26 - Bourbon Street - Concord, CA
Aug. 27 - The Galaxy Theatre - Santa Ana, CA

MY RUIN, who parted ways with drummer **Yael** and bassist **Johnny Chow** (a.k.a. **John Mark Bechtel**, ex-**SYSTEMATIC**) earlier in the year, have yet to announce a new record deal since "getting released" from their contract with **Century Media Records** last summer. The band had issued one EP (**"The Shape of Things to Come"**) and one full-length CD (**"The Horror of Beauty"**) through the Los Angeles-based label.

> **DARK FUNERAL** guitarist **Lord Ahriman** has posted the following studio update in the "Forums" section of the band's official web site: "Another amazingly good week has been completed at **Dug-Out Studios**. This week we have been working simultaneously on the three remaining songs planned for our new Satanic Symphony. We managed to finish one of them, a hellish song in 270 bpm and full on blasting right through (excluding some short but powerful breaks etc.). The other two are written to a 60% / 30% and we hope to have them down this coming week. I have gotten some killer ideas over the weekend that I will try out first thing on Monday morning. And as soon as we have all songs down, we will begin to lay down the 'real' guitar tracks, can't fucken wait! **"Matte [Modin]** has now laid down drums on 5 of the songs. And it sounds AMAZING!!! On this album he really gets a chance to show what an amazingly talented drummer he really is. "Now with most of the songs written, we all begin to get a better picture of what the hell we're creating here. One of the most interesting things is perhaps that it will indeed be our most varied album thus far. And it feels like each song could carry a whole album by itself. Some of the songs are **'Total Darkness'**, crushing everything in its path, while others are a bit more melodic. Still I can assure you that you'll hear its **DARK FUNERAL** in the flesh! "Compared to our previous albums, where we set one bpm for the whole album, we have this time given each song its own, varying somewhere between 260 – 280 bpm (might even end up on 300 bpm before we're completely done with this album). "**[Emperor Magus] Caligula** is currently busy writing lyrics for the new songs. And I hope to be able to give you some info about them next weekend. "I know I've promised you photos, but we just haven't had time for it. However, we plan to shoot some this coming week. So next weekend you'll get some, OK. Until then..."

> Italy's **THY MAJESTIE** have uploaded the cover artwork (created by **Andrè Beckston**) for their upcoming album, **"Jean D'Arc"**, at **www.thymajestie.com** "Jean D'Arc" is scheduled for release in September/October via **Scarlet Records**. The band, who recently announced the addition of singer **Giulio Di Gregorio (IRENCROS)** to the group's ranks, cancelled a couple of festival appearances earlier in the year. The group's last studio album, **"Hastings 1066"**, was released in 2002.

> According to the **Helsingin Sanomat**, the trial of **Nils Gustafsson**, who is suspected of the infamous Lake Bodom murders of 1960 (a crime which gave **CHILDREN OF BODOM** the

inspiration for their name), is expected to begin in late July at the earliest. According to **Judge Heikki Mikkola**, the court timetable for the 45-year-old murder case could be honed further in a separate preparatory session, so that the indictment could be read out in mid-August. The schedule largely depends on how the timetables of all interested parties can be accommodated. "There are quite a few people who need to be heard in person. What is decisive is to make sure that they can be brought here so that the case can be heard without interruption," **Mikkola** says. The landmark trial is expected to attract an exceptional amount of media attention, and the court is preparing to place limits on the number of media representatives and members of the public allowed into the fairly small courtroom. For instance, television cameras will be allowed in only a short period of time. "These are difficult matters, but it is most important for us to get this case solved properly. If we have to tell someone 'sorry, but there is no more room for you', then that is how it will have to be." **Gustafsson** himself was disappointed to hear of the decision to prosecute. His lawyer, **Riitta Leppiniemi**, said that she expects that the issue of innocence or guilt will be determined first, and that this would be followed by the more difficult question of the statute of limitations. The suspect was released from remand custody in May last year. For more information on the Lake Bodom murders, visit the **CHILDREN OF BODOM** fan site Scythes-Of-Bodom.com.



CHILDREN OF BODOM

> **EXODUS** guitarist **Gary Holt** has posted the following message on the group's official web site: "**Paul [Bostaph**, ex-**SLAYER**, **FORBIDDEN]** completed all his drums tracks yesterday and I'm just blown away by what he can do behind the kit. One of the greatest I've ever had the pleasure of watching perform in my life. Just total mayhem on the drums, but so grooving at the same time. "That means I'm up next and I salivating at the thought of tracking guitars. I went down to the studio to set up my gear today and I have got to tell you, It's pure, unadulterated joy when you have put up a wall of sound like I did today. Plugged in a few different combinations of my Marshalls and Peavey xxx's and it was fucking crushing. We have tomorrow off but Sunday won't come soon enough for me." **EXODUS**' as-yet-untitled follow-up to 2004's **"Tempo of the Damned"** is being recorded at **Trident** studios in Pacheco, California and will mark the band's first release with new singer **Rob Dukes**. Mixing duties will be handled by **Andy Sneap** (**MACHINE HEAD**, **NEVERMORE**, **ARCH ENEMY**, **KREATOR**). Among the tracks set to appear on the CD is **"Shovel Headed Kill Machine"** (working title), which **Holt** has described as "one of the fastest **EXODUS** songs of all time."

> **NILE** have dropped off **CHIMAIRA**'s upcoming headlining tour due to "scheduling conflicts" and have been replaced by **SIX FEET UNDER**. **CHIMAIRA** guitarist **Rob Arnold** had the following to say about the **SIX FEET UNDER**'s addition to the bill: "I am totally excited about the upcoming tour. I have been a fan of **SIX FEET UNDER** since 1995 when the **'Haunted'** record hit the streets. I have also been a long time fan of **Chris Barnes** and his career in general. I'm looking forward to making new friends so I can request to hear my favorite songs live." Dates and venues for this tour will be announced as early as next week. Look out for **CHIMAIRA**, **SIX FEET UNDER**, **ALL THAT REMAINS**, and **3 INCHES OF BLOOD** in your city this fall.

> **ARSIS** will enter the studio in late-July to record a new EP. The EP will be titled "A Diamond For Disease" and will feature the title track (clocking in at over 12 minutes in length) in addition to a cover of Alice Cooper's "Roses On White Lace." The EP will tentatively be available on October 25th.

> **ALL THAT REMAINS** have officially found a replacement for bassist Matt Deis, who amicably left the band last month. Joining the group is Josh Venn, of Blood Has Been Shed. Venn will remain in both bands, though ATR will be his full-time gig. States the band: "We welcome Josh into our family and he is very excited to get out on the road and tour."

> SHADOWSFALL are on the verge of signing a European deal with Roadrunner Records, informed sources have told BLABBERMOUTH.NET. The Massachusetts-based band, who sold nearly 250,000copies of their latest CD, "The War Within", in the United States, have fulfilled their commitment to Century Media Records and are expected to sign a big-money major-label deal (possibly with Atlantic) for the North American territory. SHADOWS FALL had previously indicated that they were very happy with Century Media and had no intentions of signing with a bigger label. In an interview with Metal-Rules.com conducted last year, SHADOWSFALL singer Brian Fair said of Century Media, "They have seriously stepped it up in such a way that all you can ask from a label is that as you grow as a band is that they step up and push you further and further. I've been amazed at the job they've done for us in the last couple years. It's been amazing to feel that support. It makes you work harder, you know what I mean? It's just awesome. Especially being on a small label like that compared with some of the bands that we've seen step up to the major labels, I think we have just as much going for us as they do. Only we still have all the control (laughs)." SHADOWS FALL have been confirmed as one of the main-stage performers at this year's Ozzfest.

> OBITUARY front man John Tardy has posted the following message on the group's official web site: "We got home late on Sunday from the five festivals we played in the last10 days. Awesome trip! Holland, Slovenia, Finland, France and Germany...thanks to all our fans that came out to support us and all the great festivals for having us play. I think it took us like 10 flights through 6 different airports and hours and hours of driving but we did made all the shows...BARELY!!!" OBITUARY released their sixth studio record, "Frozen in Time", on July 19 via Roadrunner Records. OBITUARY is also planning to hit the road this fall with brethren NAPALM DEATH and DEAD TO FALL. The group's first collection of new songs since 1997's "Back from theDead", "Frozen in Time" was self-produced by the band, with Mark Prator and Scott Burns engineering, and was mastered by Tom Morris at Morri sound. Download the track "Insane" at Roadrun.com.

> BOLT THROWER drummer Martin Kearns has posted the fourth installment of the group's studio report at their official web site. Check it out at BoltThrower.com. As previously reported, BOLT THROWER recently entered Andy Faulkner's Sable Rose studios to record their eighth, as-yet-untitled album. The band expects to spend the next three months recording the CD for a tentative October/November release via Metal Blade Records. Earlier this year, BOLT THROWER announced the return of original vocalist Karl Willetts as a full-time member. Willetts rejoined the group as the replacement for Dave Ingram, who left the band in August 2004 due to long-standing "health and personal problems." BOLT THROWER's upcoming CD will be the follow up to 2001's "Honour, Valour, Pride", which was the only BOLT THROWER release to feature Ingram on vocals.

> HAMMERFALL guitarist Oscar Dronjak has posted the following message on the group's official web site: "First off, sorry for not updating the news in a while. As you probably know, we have been on tour quite a lot the past months, and that is one of the reasons for my tardiness. But if you live in Europe, I guarantee you it was worth the wait: the fall/winter of 2005 will see HAMMERFALL and STRATOVARIUS doing a double headliner on the road together! For five-and-a-half weeks,

we'll be traveling around, from Finland and Sweden in the north to Italy and Spain in the south, from France and Benelux in the west to Slovenia and Hungary in the east, and Germany and Austria and everything else in between. It will be total madness, and a lot of fun times for everyone! Check our tour page for more details regarding this monumental live experience, as I'm sure it will be remembered as. "The around-the-world trip we undertook in May was a fantastic success, with some definitive highlights in Tokyo, Guadalajara, Santiago and Sao Paolo. Ah, hell, they were all tremendous! Thanks everyone for helping make the shows the complete euphoria they were, hope to see you all again next time! "The audience reception at the gigs so far have been overwhelming, and I don't expect it to wane anytime soon with all the great stuff we've got coming up. The coming weekend, we'll be in Sundsvall, Kristianstad (both Sweden) and Gentofte (outside of Copenhagen, Denmark). The weekend after that, we'll be in the Czech Republic for two shows, should be spectacular. "Hope to see and hear you at one or more of these live events."

> Polish death metallers DECAPITATED have revealed the tentative routing for their upcoming North American tour with VADER (headliners) and DEW-SCENTED. The schedule is shaping up as follows:

Nov. 05 - Worcester, MA
Nov. 06 - Springfield, VA
Nov. 07 - New York City, NY
Nov. 08 - Cleveland, OH
Nov. 09 - Chicago, IL
Nov. 10 - Minneapolis, MN
Nov. 11 - Winnipeg
Nov. 12 - Regina
Nov. 13 - Saskatoon
Nov. 14 - Calgary
Nov. 15 - Edmonton
Nov. 16 - Vancouver
Nov. 17 - Seattle
Nov. 18 - Portland
Nov. 19 - San Francisco, CA
Nov. 20 - Los Angeles, CA
Nov. 21 - Santa Ana, CA
Nov. 22 - Phoenix, AZ
Nov. 24 - Corpus Christi, TX
Nov. 25 - San Antonio, TX
Nov. 26 - Houston, TX
Nov. 27 - Oklahoma City, OK
Nov. 28 - St. Louis, MO
Nov. 29 - Dayton, OH
Nov. 30 - Utica, NY

Right after the dates with VADER, DECAPITATED will embark on a 10-date headlining tour of Canada. The dates are as follows:

Dec. 01 - Toronto, Ontario (ON)
Dec. 02 - Cambridge, Ontario (ON)
Dec. 03 - Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec (QC)
Dec. 04 - Ottawa, Ontario (ON)
Dec. 05 - Montreal, Quebec (QC)
Dec. 06 - St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec (QC)
Dec. 07 - Montreal, Quebec (QC)
Dec. 08 - Trois-Rivieres, Quebec (QC)
Dec. 09 - Rimouski, Quebec (QC)
Dec. 10 - Quebec City, Quebec (QC)

DECAPITATED are about to embark on a European headlining tour, with support from bands like GOREROTTED, DETONATION and DAM. The tour schedule includes 12 dates in England, Scotland and Ireland and 14dates in such countries as Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Denmark and Czech Republic. Exact cities and dates will be announced soon. DECAPITATED recently parted ways with vocalist Sauron and replaced him with Covan, formerly of ATROPHIARED SUN.


GOD FORBID

> Reunited New York thrash metal veterans NUCLEAR ASSAULT have lined up the following dates during the coming months:

Aug. 27 - The Chance - Poughkeepsie, NY (w/ TESTAMENT)
Aug. 28 - Crazy Donkey - Farmingdale, NY (w/ TESTAMENT)
Sep. 23 - Sabalas - Portland, OR
Sep. 24 - Studio Seven - Seattle, WA
Sep. 25 - Fat Tuesdays - Spokane, WA

As previously reported, SPV/Steamhammer Records has set an August 29 European release date for the new album from NUCLEAR ASSAULT, entitled "Third World Genocide". The group's first collection of new material in ten years, "Third World Genocide is said to be "a rich blend of NUCLEAR ASSAULT's lethal, politically conscious metal and songs showcasing the band's wicked sense of humor."

> Reunited death metal legends SUFFOCATION filmed their July 21 show at Club Loaded(at the Crazy Donkey) in Farmingdale, New York for an upcoming DVD. Also appearing on the bill was CATACTROPHIC (featuring Trevor Peres from OBITUARY), TENSION, MORTICIAN, DESTROYED BY ANGER, STRAY FROM THE PATH, REVENANCE and WITHOUT REMORSE. SUFFOCATION are continuing to tour in support of their latest CD, "Souls to Deny", which was released in April 2004 through Relapse Records. The band's first full album of new material since 1995's "Pierced From Within", "Souls to Deny" was recorded at New York's Full Force Studios with engineer Joe Cincotta and is "the cleanest, heaviest SUFFOCATION album to date," according to drummer Mike Smith. SUFFOCATION's current lineup consists of Smith, vocalist Frank Mullen, guitarists Terrance Hobbs and Guy Marchais and bassist Derek Boyer.

> GOD FORBID guitarist Doc Coyle has posted the following message on the group's official website: "The recording process for the new GOD FORBID album, 'IV: Constitution of Treason', is finally complete. This record sounds massive, and is definitely our most dynamic, complex, and diverse effort to date. It clocks in around 50 minutes, which would make it our longest album, and will hopefully make up for some of the people who thought 'Gone Forever' was too short. I don't want to hype it up by telling everyone how great it is. I'd rather wait until some clips are released through the Internet or CD samplers, and let the music speak for itself. I can say that band is very satisfied with the work we've done, and feel like another plateau has been reached as musicians. Lyrically, the album is very deep and dark. In fact, 'Constitution' has become a full-on concept album with a story included about a post-apocalyptic society. This story and its themes intertwines heavily with the artwork handled wonderfully again by Travis Smith, who did the design work for 'Gone Forever' and the 'Better Days' EP. With the exception of some weekend tour dates in July, GOD FORBID will be taking the rest of the summer off, for our first real break in a year and a half. Our next U.S. tour should be expected near the album's release date, September 20th, and a European tour should follow. We've also taken some steps in the next frontier. That's right playing some shows on M-A-R-S. Mars Bitches. See y'all at the beach. Peace. "

> Australia's Day Of Contempt recently secured a deal with Epitaph Records. The group has previously released material with Good Life Recordings. Their new EP, "The Will To Live," was produced by Josh Abraham (Weezer) and will hit stores on August 9th.

> **A note to "Death From Below" readers:** Shaun Luu, a notable individual within the Syracuse music scene, has lost his battle with brain cancer, an illness he's been suffering from for nearly three years. One week before his 23rd birthday, Luu died in his sleep June 9th, with his family by his side. A benefit show will likely take place soon. Luu was the lead vocalist of Glaciers (originally known as Word As A Virus). May he rest in peace.



If and when Morbid Angel retire, I have no doubt that Nile will take the death metal throne. Over the last decade, Nile have been invigorating and educating fans worldwide with their Egypt focused, death metal driven battleaxe of a band, and continually creating some of the most intelligent, brutal, brilliant records in and outside of the genre.

The always funny, interesting and distinguished gentleman of death metal, Mr. Karl Sanders, talked me with via phone about their incredible new full length, "Annihilation of The Wicked," member changes, producer shifts, Egyptological figureheads, methods of torture, defining "epic" songs, memories of growing up around Morbid Angel, and... the pitbull. It is once again my extreme honor to introduce Karl Sanders...

How are you doing today Karl?
I'm doing alright. You got some questions in store for me? (laughs)

Just a few. (laughs) So I heard you got pretty sick a bit ago. Everything alright now?
Yeah, unfortunately when we on tour in Phoenix, I got food poisoning from Domino's.
It was pretty horrible. I just had to sweat it out and miss a show in New Mexico.

Well, I guess it would be safe to say that Nile isn't going to endorsing the Noid anytime soon... (laughs)
(laughs) Probably not.

You just released your latest masterpiece, "Annihilation of the Wicked." How do you feel it compares to previous outings?
I don't think it compares at all. (laughs) We've never really made a record like this. It's definitely not like "Darkened Shrines." We decided to take things down a different path. We caught out a few extraneous elements, and just made things really savage.

In regard to the songwriting process, was it the same as other records, or did you try a different approach this time around?
It was a slightly different approach, since before we've worked with drum machines and computers, and for "Annihilation" we had a live drummer. He was in on things from the start and it made a really cohesive union between the guitar, bass and drum arrangements.

You elected to work with Neil Kernon for "Annihilation." Though your long time partner in crime Bob Moore was aboard, Neil was definitely at the helm. Why did you choose to utilize his talents, what did he bring to the table and why not Bob full on or possibly someone else like Punchy?
We wanted to do the absolute best job we could, and we felt that Neil had the experience and perspective of what we were trying to achieve and help us get it.

The last time we talked, you told me about how you felt that records should not only be fun to listen to, but fun to make. Was "Annihilation" an enjoyable studio experience?
For us it was, but it really wasn't for Jon. (laughs) We had a lot of fun, doing stuff with George was a blast. We slaved away on it, but it was a good slave, really dig in and do it.

Speaking of Jon, if you wouldn't mind helping lay all rumors to rest, why is he not in the band anymore? I know you issued a formal statement, but there still seems to be a lot of gossip.
Jon wanted to stick with his day job and he couldn't continue touring and keep his day job. The fact is, the long time benefits of his job far outweighed anything he could have hoped to recoup in Nile.

Orion Landau who did the layout for your solo record, also created the one for "Annihilation." Did you guys collaborate, or was it more like letting Orion loose on the project?
We turned him loose. He called me a couple times to ask some questions, but mostly we let him run with it.

I really like the packaging. Did you guys intend on making it a digipack?
That was Orion's idea. We like it too.

The lyrical explanations are some of your very best in my opinion. I just wanted to ask some questions about a few in particular: "Dusk Falls"- You talk about your use of the MIDI, so I was just curious as a band that employs various technologies to assist in bringing your music to life, what do you think the role of electronics is in death metal, with things such as triggers, samples, loops?
I think with any fun toy, there is a use for them in a musical way, but it's possible to abuse them. Electronics are just another musical tool.

"Cast Down The Heretic"- I always wondered myself why you hadn't chosen to do a piece about Akhenaten. Such a fascinating character, not because he was great, but because he wasn't, yet he tried (and in spots, succeeded) to change the entire theology and culture of Egypt in many ways. Which makes me wonder, who are better examples of leaders for study: those who are of poor quality, so we can learn from their mistakes or others of high caliber, who are worthy of followers, admiration and allegiance? What were some of the other possible treatments of Akhenaten that you had brainstormed?
I think you have to study both. You really can't have one without the other. To appreciate something

"Man, that pitbull...they loved that dog. They fucking did all sorts of crazy shit with it. Yeah, they fed it live cats. They'd put it in one of the backrooms, and then throw a cat in and close the door. The cat would be trapped inside with this huge pitbull. I mean they definitely encouraged that dog to be vicious."

great, you have to understand what makes one really bad. As for other treatments, well I'd just rather shy away from that. (laughs) I don't want to drag out everything, it's like having to listen to all your outtakes.

So, is this your way saying you haven't got all night to explain them all? (laughs)
(laughs) No, I'm just saying I'm too embarrassed to go over many of them.

"User-Maat-Re"- Similar vein of my last question. I thought about your comments on parental drive, the ghost figures of ancestry, who make so many struggle to be the very best; is it a good thing or a bad thing? Being a father yourself, any thoughts? I was somewhat reminded of the idea you expressed in "Black Seeds." That when a wrong is done, it plants a seed in someone, and that hatred grows. Do you think Rameses has something like that in his system, his soul, but instead it was a drive to succeed at all costs?
Well, as far as my kid goes, he likes music and has a guitar, but I encourage him to do his own thing always. I'm going to push him to death. I mean, I had no real desire to follow in my father's footsteps, he's a computer programmer. I have zero interest in that. With some people it's really strong, but in my life, I haven't actually experienced it.
For Rameses, yeah there had to be something, how else could you get a guy motivated like that.

"Burning Pits"- Will you ever play it live, since it causes you such physical pain?
We didn't play it on this tour because there wasn't much of a point since it was an opening slot and we only had 45 minutes. We are talking about doing it on the next tour though.

"Slave Stick"- Such a terrifying form of torture, but I have to ask, which method of torture practiced in history do you think is the worst? I'm going to go with walling myself.
Wooden spike through the testicles; that one always made me cringe. (laughs)

"Spawn Of Uamenti"- I think you one upped Punchy's use of the "Star Trek" sample on your solo record of atmospheric winds. "Bull Crocodile- Mating Call" is pretty damn hard to beat. (laughs)
When I came across that on the Internet, I was laughing so hard at the whole preposterousness of it. Yet, when inspiration strikes, you just got to go with it.

"Annihilation of The Wicked"- Last time we talked, you told me you had a greater appreciation for early Egyptologists. What consistently draws you to the work of Sir Wallis Budge?
He was the product of a past century, and he clung onto a lot of ideas that were fairly improbable but overall, his stuff makes for the best death metal songs.

It's funny when you talk about people wanting you do to "epic" songs, because I think Nile really has defined what an epic song is. It's not necessarily a certain length, it's just the grandiose nature of it all. Do you agree?
Most definitely. I think that there are/were some bands that have a knack for doing stuff that sounds huge, cinematic; grandiose is an excellent descriptor because the music is so massive. Emperor was really great at it. Some Iron Maiden music even had that; and gave it a monumental feel. Rock music has had it for awhile, with bands like Led Zeppelin who did "Kashmir' and other epic sounding tunes.

Your remembrances of the Carolina death metal scene, the late 80's and especially the rise of Morbid Angel are well documented in Albert Mundrians' excellent book, "Choosing Death." How did you get hooked up with the project, and did you enjoy recollecting all those times? Some great stories are in there. My favorites are the one about the speaker war, and the fact that back in the day, you could have Morbid Angel wash your car. Also, did MA really feed live cats to a pitbull?
I've spoken with Albert several times over the years as he's profiled, interviewed and reviewed Nile. He was a really fascinating guy, and I definitely clicked with him really well. So when he started writing his book, he got in touch with me. In regard to the speaker war, man, that was hilarious. They had these speakers that were seriously at least four feet tall, and they'd just try to destroy each other. That house was nuts, it was fucking crazy. Man, that pitbull...they loved that dog. They fucking did all sorts of crazy shit with it. Yeah, they fed it live cats. They'd put it in one of the backrooms, and then throw a cat in and close the door. The cat would be trapped inside with this huge pitbull. I mean they definitely encouraged that dog to be vicious. They would even bring the dog to the gigs, and chain him up to the side of the stage, chained right to the PA speakers. I'm really not surprised about anything with that dog. I remember one time I let them stay in my house back in the day and they were in this school bus. They were going to crash at my apartment, and my girlfriend had these beautiful Persian cats. As soon as Trey and Richard brought the dog in, fucker went nuts and tore through our apartment. The cats were terrified and my girlfriend flat out said they were not bringing that animal in here, he's got to stay on the bus. So Trey and Richard got a hotel room for the two of them and that fucking dog. (laughs)

Well as a vegan, I can't say I approve, but hey, I'm sure Glen Benton does. (laughs)
(laughs) Probably.

How did you get in contact with George and how have things been going with him?
George is a great guy. He has worked so motherfucking hard for this band. I can't say enough good things about him. We saw him first when Nile played with his band in Greece and when it came time for a new drummer, Derek Roddy's initial suggestion was him. Derek was just going gaga over George. He definitely had the skills that we needed. He really slaved away and it shows.

No disagreement. I mean, I don't think you can get a more rousing endorsement than Derek Roddy saying you're a great drummer.
(laughs) That's true.

What about Joe? A lot of people have been asking about him I'm sure, especially with his young age. How has he adapted to being in Nile?
His playing and his onstage performances are great. During the rest of the day, well he's youthful and inexperienced, so there is a bit of clash, since Dallas and I are much older and have been doing this for some time. It's somewhat like if you had to hang out with your Dad all day, how fast would you get on his nerves? I think that is a bit what's like.

Does Nile have touring plans for the fall?
We got a headlining run over Europe, which should be a lot of fun, then hopefully we'll be doing a headlining run in the US.

Being an elder statesmen of the death metal scene, what do you see as better and/or worse about the present day community, as opposed to the early days?
I really don't claim to be a spokesman for the entire genre. Honestly, I just feel honored to be able to play this music and have fans. I'm definitely grateful to the metal scene. I don't ever want to seem pompous or act like I know everything. It's a big scene with lots of different opinions and viewpoints. It's a combined effort on a lot of people's parts.

What keeps you involved in death metal/Nile after nearly a decade?
I don't know man. There is just something very primal when you first pick up a guitar and strike that big E-chord. It just grabs you, and that connection right there is a timeless thing. I got to have that. I have to play my guitar at crushing volumes; I couldn't be without that feeling. This is all I want to do. There's no really crazy or elaborate answer. It's just what I love.



Origin are one of the most popular and respected technical death metal bands going today. With their potent musical napalm of blast beats, smoldering riffs, and sickening vocals, they have captivated the scene and fans across the world. Guitarist Paul answers my questions of the recording process, videos, the popularity of extreme music and touring.

Origin has gone through some line up changes in its lifetime, so would you mind starting off with the present roster, and a little bit about what you've been up to since "Informis?"
James Lee Vox Clinton Appelhanz Guitar Mike Flores Bass James King Drums

What does the band name mean to you?
It's a word that creates question...It's a beginning of something but everyone has different beliefs & starting points so its up to personal interpretation...

How was the recording process for "Echoes of Decimation," who did you work with this time, and how do you feel it compares to your last record?
We worked @ Black Lodge Studios (Coalesce-The Esoteric-The Getup kids, etc., etc.) We recorded with Clinton Appelhanz & Rob Rebeck...

The artwork for "Echoes" is quite imposing. Who is the party responsible for its creation?
It was done by Robert Black He does ink work too... this was airbrushed...

Are you planning to shoot any videos for "Echoes of Decimation"?
Yes...

You are a group I've heard many metal/hardcore bands say they wish they had the talent of, especially in your technical abilities. Who inspired you initially, what drives you to better your playing, and how do you feel being hailed as one of the greats of technical death?
That comes with time...The bands continue to get better & better & push us too I am just of fan of music played with conviction... I like shred stuff to brutal death to classical music...

What are your thoughts on the growing role of technology in the metal scene, i.e. the active use of ProTools for recording, and more controversial devices such as triggers for drums, etc?
If its advancing & enhancing the music so be it!!!

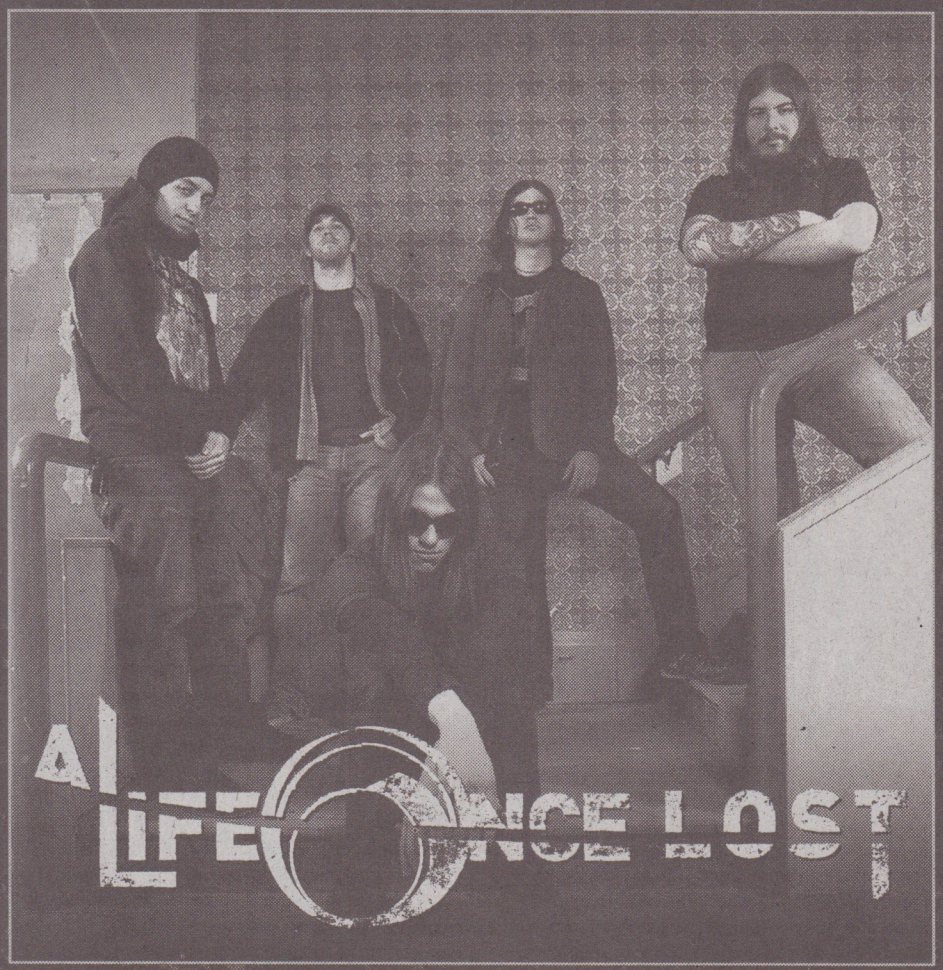
How is life with Relapse?
All is well here...We have more work to do!!!
Who designed your website? It looks incredible.
A friend I grew up with through school. His name is Jamie Scott. He is amazing!!!

How do you view the growing popularity of extreme music? Do you believe that its integrity is being crushed under the weight of capitalist enterprise or is it's increased presence on mainstream radar a boon for underappreciated and often poorly funded bands?
It's the circle of life...Bad bands will come & go... The strong will survive & new hybrids will continue to form & improve the scene...

Origin has been around for nearly 8 years. Do you feel that you've accomplished all you set out to when you started this band and how do you feel the metal community has changed since your debut?
We have more to do but the reemergence of Headbangers Ball & Fuse has definitely put peoples eye back on the market...

What are your tour plans in 2005?
We just did a East coast tour & we will be going out 50 shows in 51 days... There will be more tours after that...Check www.origin-site.com or www.relapse.com under the tour pages.

Last words?
Thanks again.



If you wouldn't mind introducing yourself and your duties with ALOL?
My name is Robert Meadows and I sing for the band.

Where are you guys from, who else is involved, when did the band form and what releases do you have out?
Two of the guys live in Bucks County, PA, while the other three guys live in New Jersey. The band started in the spring of 1999. We released "Open Your Mouth..." in 2000 on Loudnet.com, a year and a half later we released a five song CD on Robotic Empire called "The Fourth Plague: Flies", about three months later we released a seven inch version of the Robotic Empire release on Deathwish, Inc., and we followed that up with our Deathwish, Inc., full length called "A Great Artist" in 2003. We released "Open Your Mouth..." again in 2004 on Robotic Empire. That is it I think...

How old are you guys now? I remember when "Open Your Mouth Forth Speechless..." came out, you were all pretty young. Wasn't your drummer like 15?
The youngest guy in the band is 20 and the oldest is 25.

You've had quite a few labels over the years including Loudnet, Robodog (RoboticEmpire), Deathwish and now, Ferret. What has led you to so many different homes, and why did you choose Ferret over other potential suitors?
We still remain close friends with Andy Low and Robotic Empire. For what we wanted to do with the band, Ferret was the best way to go.

What does the title mean to you?
It is the internal struggle of finding happiness, sanity, safety, trust, etc...We are all HUNTERS in some way or another. Life is not easy and you will struggle.

Who are you working with producer and studio wise this time around?
We worked with Rob Caggiano (Anthrax, Cradle of Filth, Bleeding Through) for Scarp 60Productions. You can really tell how mature the song writing has gotten with his help.

The layout for "A Great Artist" was fairly powerful and eye catching. What do you have planned for "HUNTER?"
Paul Ramano (Mastodon, The Red Chord) will be taking charge with the artwork for this record.† Wait till you see what he has come up with.

What is the writing process like in ALOL?
Someone will come in with a few riffs pieced together. We then move this and take out that. For HUNTER we practiced five days a week for about six hours a day; a more intense writing process for this CD then "A Great Artist".

Do you have any particular agenda/ message with your lyrics, any political or social content?
I am not confident enough to talk about politics and religion, so I tend to focus on relationships more. Relationships with friends, family, etc...I see more negative in people and usually try not to trust people all that much.

Is A Life Once Lost a full time band, or are you still holding down day jobs when not on the road?
The band is our job.

Speaking of touring, what's on tap for this spring/summer?
We are out on The Sounds of The Underground Tour featuring Lamb of God, Clutch, Opeth, Madball, Gwar, and many more. After that we leave for two weeks to the UK and Europe for a few shows with Every Time I Die, Twelve Tribes and Misery Signals. September and October are going to be pretty crazy for us.

Vegan? Straight Edge?
Neither.

Who makes the finest cheese steak in Philly?
Jim Steaks on fourth and South.

Favorite shop on South Street?
Jim Steaks on fourth and South.

Better summer time tool: Slip 'N' Slides or Super Soakers?
That wouldn't work in the van to well.

Musician you'd most like to murder:
You can use this for black mail later in my life possibly.

Last words?
"We don't get high...we stay high!"

ANIMOSITY



Bay Area deathcore unit is taking things over. If you don't know that now, you soon will. Although relatively young in actual and musical age, this talented outfit has more chops than a butcher shop and skills that rival bands with more than double their years. Blackmarket Activities will be dropping their latest, "Empires" on August 23rd and I chatted it up with vocalist Leo Miller about that particular record, touring, their triumphs and tragedies, and their guitarist's very metal uncles.

If you wouldn't mind, could you please give a history of Animosity?
Fresh out of middle school, I was set on starting a hardcore/metal band for a couple years. The entire hardcore world had already captured me at a super young age and pretty much received my undivided attention by the age of 12. As I entered high school I immediately met Nick Lazaro, who recruited his best friend Frank Costa to start the band. Along with another kid from our high school, Us four were animosity for about a year...the youngest band that nor-cal hardcore had ever seen. Since then, Frank and myself are the only two remaining members of the original lineup; however, the band did not really pick up until Navene Koperweis and his Brother Sean joined the band in 2002. Now in 2005 with our second release on its way, our current and hopefully final lineup is Frank, Navene, Chase, Dan and myself (Leo). We have toured the entire country, and made deals with both Tribunal records (shut it down) and Black Market Activities (Empires) and had a ton of fun.

You guys formed at a relatively young age, and have done quite a bit in the four or so years you've been playing. Yet, Animosity always played extremely well, even on your first demo. Do you feel that your chops eradicated any doubts crowds/listeners may have about members being in their teens?
Well, I think that perhaps our age was more of a disguise when we were super young. Although the demo is not completely pitiful, it is not very good, at least when I listen to it. The fact that we were so young eradicated the doubts of some fine tooth listeners, simply because of our young age, I think that people were more amazed, but overall, I think our music has spoken for itself. We have definitely played shows where everyone is starring at us before we start looking like, "What the fuck is this? daycare?" and then being completely shocked after our set that we were playing at the same and even sometimes a higher level then well-aged metal/ hardcore bands. The age thing worked both ways for us, some people were doubtful and some were favored us for it.

Coming from the San Francisco Bay Area, a scene with a very rich metal/hardcore history, how did its past/present acts influence Animosity?
Living in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area has influenced us in a tremendous amount of ways, far beyond simple musical influences. I believe that everything from our ideals and lyrical content to the music that we play to who we are as people is deeply rooted here in the Bay. Most noticeable on Shut it Down, we are heavily influence from local thrash bands like Testament, VIO-lence, Exodus, and early Metallica. At the same time, we also looked to local bands from the other end of the spectrum like Hoods, and Sworn Vengeance for musical influence. I remember a time when basically if you lived in the bay area, all of your favorite bands did too. It seems like at this point, hardcore and metal have grown so much that location rarely correlates to a bands sound.

When Animosity began, you had more of a mix of thrash and hardcore going on. While the newer material still has the hardcore edge, I definitely hear a strong progression towards death metal and grindcore. Is that a move the band has been making over the years? Do you consider yourselves to be more of hardcore band or a metal band? What do you think about the growing merger between the two scenes after many years of separation?
I think that our progression towards death metal was pretty natural. We have always had death metal elements in our music, but I guess not as much. I will just put

it plainly and spare the bullshit...Death metal rules and it is the most brutal style of music. Although we don't consciously make decisions to change our sound, changes have definitely occurred over the years. I think it just has to do with our personal listening habits and the fact that we are all simply getting better at doing what we do. As far as what we label ourselves, we have all decided that clamping on to a specific title not only limits our musical progression and our fan base, but more so is just simply stupid. There is a lot of baggage that comes along with being called a metal band or a hardcore band, we have love and respect for both and if you ask me, they are one in the same. Furthermore, we all listen to tons of music...music that isn't metal or hardcore. Also a lot of our new album takes influences from other more unlikely sources like Jimi Hendrix and Frank Zappa to name a few.

You've had quite a few line up changes from the early days. How have they affected the progress of the band? Do you ever wonder what might have been had you not encountered those pitfalls or do you feel they've made you stronger as a band?
I have never actually thought about that; however, every time we need a new member we always try to go back to Nick Lazaro who was one of the founding members of Animosity. That obviously never works out. At any rate, members have been replaced quickly every time we lose somebody, so it has never really been to detrimental. Nick Lazaro actually wrote a large portion of Shut It Down and when he left we wondered how it would affect our sound. Navene took over Nick's portion of the writing responsibilities, which has a lot to do with our later death metal sound. Together as the two prime writers for Animosity, Frank and Navene have held it down pretty well, maintaining our roots and consistently incorporating new elements.

I know Navene was also playing for Hoods for a while. Is he involved with that band at all anymore, and do you think his involvement with them was a hindrance or something that made Animosity even better overall?
To be honest it didn't really affect us at all. There were occasions when either band had to miss a show, but at the time we were not a full time band so it was not a big deal.

A while ago, Animosity experience a real tragedy, when your practice space was broken into and most of your equipment stolen. This surely was very devastating. Have they caught the guilty parties, and if so, has any of your equipment been recovered? If there are still items missing, what are they, so other musicians can keep an eye out for them especially if they bear any distinguishing marks? How can people help you out?
So here is the story with the robbery. The dude who robbed us actually lived and sold drugs out of the storage unit right next to ours. He was caught on drug charges and the police found our bass in his unit. Unfortunately that was all that they recovered. He is now in jail, which leaves us stuck. We can't get our stuff back from him and we can't kill him. We actually had insurance that was going to cover 11 thousand dollars worth of the loss but got out of it on a minor technicality. They decided to consider our band a business because we have an online store on our website. The insurance that we have is not business insurance, so we got fucked.

A big event occurred in February when Animosity signed with Blackmarket Activities/Metal Blade records. How did this deal come about, and if it hadn't, were you planning to release another album with Tribunal, or had you already begun looking for a new label?
I was looking for a new label. Tribunal is great and served us well, but was not the right match for us considering the direction that we want to go in. We owe a lot to Matt and tribunal though. Surprisingly, Blackmarket wanted to release Shut It Down originally.
We played with the Red Chord a few years a go and ever since then I have been in contact with Guy who runs Blackmarket. Out of all the offers that we got for the new album, Blackmarket was the most honest nd most appealing, not to mention that Guy rules.

"Empires" is set to drop August 23rd. In what ways is it similar/different from "Shut It Down"? Did you record with Zack Ohren again, who did the artwork, and what can longtime fans expect from your latest?
It is a few steps up from Shut it Down. In our eyes, Shut it Down is child's play compared to Empires. It faster, heavier and more extreme all around. It is recorded with Zach Ohren, but sounds like nothing he has ever done before. As for the artwork, it was done by Paul Romano (Mastodon, The Red Chord, Dead To Fall) and we are extremely impressed. In fact, watching the artwork come together has really been one of the most exciting aspects of the album making process. Paul is really amazing and did a wonderful job. To any of you wondering what Empires is all about, you need not worry. It rules pretty hard.

I know that you and Navene recently guested on the Abacus/Century Media debut from Sacramento metalcore kings, Embrace The End. How did this come about, and are there any other guest spots from Animosity members on other records kids should be on lookout for?
We don't have any guest appearances on Empires, we just couldn't get it together. As far as our vocal appearances on the Embrace The End CD, we have always been great friends with those guys. I am very happy and proud to have contributed in the minor way that I did to their awesome release.

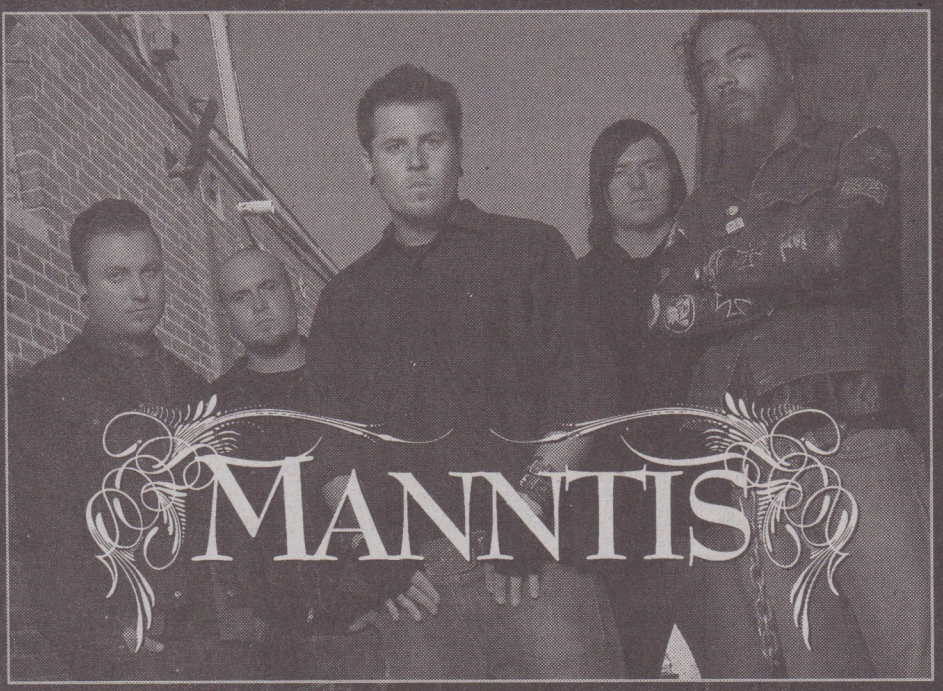
How can people get in touch with you and check out your sound?
Our website has all of my contact info on it. The address is www.animositysf.com. Also we just uploaded a new song from Empires to the Internet. You can hear and download the song "Commoditism" at www.purevolume.com/animositysanfrancisco. This is also linked on our website.

Funniest tour story you've got:
That's a hard one. Unfortunately most of the tour stories we've got have to do with losing all kinds of money or something of that nature. Haha. Recently in Jacksonville Florida, Dan ate an entire large pepperoni pizza and then did head circles straight through our entire set. Immediately after leaving the stage he spent about an hour puking his guts out and was sick for like 2 weeks. I guess that's kind of mean, but the ridicule he received was pretty damn funny. We had an amazing night in Tacoma Washington with Set Your Goals but I don't know that I am at liberty to talk about it...oh and Fresno. That story will make us seem like assholes. We have definitely had some pretty fun times.

I think you should talk a little about Frank and his metal uncles.
Well basically they rule! Frank, Joe and Nick all know how to kick some major butt!

Most damage you and your brother Nate have inflicted on a crowd dancing:
Nate does most of the damage. Nearly every show he goes to, he leaves with super fucked up hands.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?
Yeah, Norcal rules! Kirby Rules! Buy the new album August 23rd! ↖



If you wouldn't mind, introduce yourself and what your role is in the band?
My name is Jake Sirokman aka Jake Daniel's and I am the vocalist for Manntis.

Who else is in Manntis and what do they play, when/where/why did the band form, and what releases do you presently have out?
Well, we've got Clint Gregory on Bass, Adair Cobley/Guitar, Jimmie Sanders/Drums and Jeremy Swanson/Guitar. The band started winter of 2000 in Riverside, CA and basically for the love of music, we had all been in previous bands before this, I guess this is what we do.

Why did you choose the name Manntis and it is spelled with two 'n's' because of a copyright argument? I ask because on both counts because there have been quite a few Mantis (whatever spelling you may use) in the history of metal. If it grew out of a legal dispute, how has that affected the progression of the band?
The name was just a joke, up at the house of Manntis (practice house) after it rains our the beginning of summer there are hundreds of praying Mantis' around, so we said what the hell. The second N just makes it look better and full.

The majority of people know Manntis from "Battle For Ozzfest." How long had the band been around before the stint on the show and what have been the most positive and negative effects of appearing on "BFO?"
It was something like three years or so, we had been doing a lot of touring by ourselves for some time as well. I think the show gave us a lot of publicity, but I feel as strong as a band that we are we would have been in the same position but maybe not as fast. The only negative part about the show is those people who still see us as "that band from MTV" but I say Fuck them, come out to a show and see what we bring to the table.

Many avid viewers of the show have stated that they believe you should have won. Did you feel your were going to?
Not so much, I knew we had a good chance, but there was no way the hardest band besides Trauma Concept was gonna take it. At least not with MTV's say. It worked out for the best though.

Was interest from Century Media and other labels there before "Battle For Ozzfest" or did it occur afterwards?
Not really sure, I knew our name was out there but nothing like a band on a National television series.

What factors led you to sign with Century Media?
Century Media is a Metal label, nothing but Metal. No disrespect to other labels, but Century doesn't sign that pussy ass indie shit, no pink shirts and no shitty swoops. I feel they will not only like our music, but they will be dedicated to it.

Lyrically, what is Manntis seeking to express?
No big words and no bullshit, my lyrics are 100% straight up and about ours and people's everyday life. Shit like girls, drinking, family and losing someone. I have nothing to hide and nether does anyone else.

Who are your musical influences?
Shit hit the fan when I first heard "Roots" by Sepultura back in 95'.Ever since then I've grew up with a heavy taste in my mouth. Ian Mckaye from Minor Threat was always up there, Rick Rodney from Strife was great live. Oh, and not to mention the old Phil Anselmo from Pantera and the great Bruce Dickinson/Iron Maiden.

What does the title "Sleep in Your Grave" mean to you, personally and/or as a band?
Not to much meaning, more of a phrase. We like to party hard, so when someone would pass out we would yell "no time to sleep, sleep in your grave". Meaning more party less sleep.

How did the "Battle For Ozzfest" tour go?
We had a blast. We love the road and would take most any tour we can get. Love all the guys in ADF and CYN, great people. It would be fun to do it again, maybe even with all the bands.

What's up in terms of road life for the summer?
Tour, Tour and more touring. TBA.

Short answer fun: Jim Hensen (Muppets, Fraggle Rock, Dark Crystal, etc) or Disney (television, movies)?
Disney all the way.

Gambling Method Of Choice: Poker, craps, dominoes, slots or betting on sports?
Poker.

Recommend liquor to lose touch with all reality:
Fuckin' Jack Daniel's.

Lindsey Lohan: better as the chubby redhead or coked out blonde?
Chubbey Redhead (yeah)

Celebrity you most want to give an ol' California brand curb stomp to?
Anyone who wears their girlfriends' jeans should be stomped.

Anything else you'd like to add/shout outs?
Riverside Brewtality Crue, the boys in Burden of Guilt, Elseworth, Bleed The Sky and all the Southern Cali bands representin'... See you all on the road!



Name/age/band duties/favorite "Batman" actor (Adam West, Michael Keaton, Val Kilmer, George Clooney, Christian Bale)?
Stevie Cruz is old enough to know better but still too young to care, he screams and throws fits for The Esoteric and finds Adam West to be the best Batman actor ever!

The history of The Esoteric goes like this:
To make a long story short The Esoteric string section has been together since high school. During that time they played tons of shows, self financed several tours and recordings, and went through two different drummers and vocalist before myself and Marshal Kilpatric joined. That was two years ago and now we have a new full length "With the Sureness of Sleepwalking" out on Prosthetic records and we are touring for the rest of our lives.

Why did you choose the name?
I personally did not choose the name but always have been interested and inspired by things of an esoteric nature, I find it fitting to play in a band called The Esoteric. Our guitar player Cory White chose it many years ago, cause he thought it sounded cool and cryptic.

You've got some big names in the band including former members of Reggie and the Full Effect, Today Is The Day and Coalesce. Do you ever feel that people are fixated on your past musical efforts and it overshadows your current work?
Not at all, because what we are doing now is really satisfying for all of us as a whole. This record is inspired by all of our past experiences musical and otherwise. Everything else we've done was more project oriented. There are elements of Coalesce and Today is The Day and even Reggie, but what we do with The Eso is the totality of our experience up until now and that seems a lot more potent and relevant, at least for us.

It's interesting that many believe you to be a brand new band, yet you've going for 7 years. Do you run into a lot of kids/critics who think you just started? Will any of your back catalog be re-recorded and/or re-released?
There are a select few out there who have grown with the band for all those years and it's awesome to have the respect and† history with those kids. But we don't mind those who think we just started because everything seems really fresh for us right now as well. There have been discussions about a releasing a discography of everything The Esoteric has done up until now, but at the moment it's all about our new record.

"With The Sureness of Sleepwalking," your latest full length was released not too long ago. Did it measure up to what you had originally planned for it, and do you desire to go to another level with your next album, or are you content with the sound you've achieved thus far?
We are very proud of "the sureness" but we will never be content with our sound. We are always pushing it to the next level, and change is what it's all about. But these are fun songs to play live and they are very layered so the music at the moment is keeping us busy and we are always finding new ways of performing them.

Why did you decide to re-title, rewrite and re-record "Disappearing..."?
It was always a great song to play live, and it lends itself well to reinterpretation. We played it so much live, we decided to record it with the new songs and it sounded as fresh as they did and seemed to fit in well and we also thought it was the best song to start the album off with. As far as the re-title I just thought the old name was lame, and "Disappearing ..." made more sense.

You recorded this album, with the exception of the drums, in your home studio. How was that experience, and what advantages/disadvantages do you find in self production? Ed Rose, who has long worked with many of your previous outfits, was on board for drum recording and mixing. When you make a record, is a therecertain thing Ed does best, or is it just good to have him on board and involved while you create?
First off let it be known that Ed Rose is the man! And if there is one thing Mr. Rose does best is drums. We were very pleased to have those tracks to build and record with. Doing the album ourselves at home was an awesome experience and we learned a lot. The major advantage to recoding at home was that we could work all day and night on our record.



We had time to layer and experiment much more. The disadvantage would be we had no Ed Rose or anyone outside of the band to bounce ideas off of or someone to provide that outside perspective, needless to say we lost ourselves in this record and it took over our lives.

I know you recently suffered a great tragedy, as your home/studio caught fire, causing massive damage and loss. I've read that things were made even worse as you didn't have renter's insurance. Did they find out the exact cause? What do you remember of that night? How have you been coping, and were you able to recover anything from the house? Did the Pay-Pal donations and benefit shows come through and help out? Is there anything else people can do to aid the Esoteric?
On that night I was watching Donnie Darko (directors cut) with a friend in the middle of the night. There was an odd smell coming from the basement and I went to check it out. I opened the basement door and smoke filled the room and fire scaled the wall going up towards Marshal's room. I screamed fire and to get out, as he came running down the stairs the fire went up the wall right past him. We all got out ok, called 911 and watched the house go up. We barely had any clothes on we were cursing the heavens, crying, beating on the ground, and bumming hard. My room being the closest to the front door, we could still here theme music from Donnie Darko coming from my window, it was weird. The fire fighters got there and it took them five or six hours before they put it out. The next day they investigated all day and asked us about a lighting fixture built in to the basement ceiling, but because of all the water they pumped into the house they washed away the reference points and called the cause of the fire "undetermined". Which means they don't know and there is nothing we could do about it. Standing outside the house during the investigation the mailman came and delivered the masters for "the sureness" We said well at least we have this record, a van, and two months of tour booked. Very few things were recovered, Marshal's one of a kind drum set didn't burn but was submerged in water, but a good friend of ours was able to get them back in shape. Other than that we borrowed gear to go on tour with. We left two weeks after the fire and have been on tour ever since. Thanks to all the mad love from our friends, family, and the metal and hardcore communities we are getting back on our feet. The compassion that we have been graced with is inspiring and we are grateful. It makes what we are doing so much more relevant and necessary, in many ways it's seems all we have is this band and we plan to make the most of it.

You guys just made a video for "Ram Faced Boy." Who was the director, what is the concept and how did the making of it go? Any plans to make more videos?
Matt Bass directed the video for Factory Features and he did one hell of a job. Making this video was a new experience and it went well. Matt really enjoyed the song and got into the lyrics and did a great job conceptualizing and symbolizing the music and lyrics. It was greatly inspired by old silent films like The Cabinet of Dr. Callagari and other films like that. There are a lot of ideas and talk of another video but nothing for sure now.

"With The Sureness Of Sleepwalking" seems to have the makings of a concept record. Is it?
Depending on how the listener interprets it, "the sureness" could be a concept record. The music is cohesive and there are common themes that recur within the songs, lyrics, and artwork. At the same time I find each song stands alone and has it's own feel.

The artwork that accompanies each set of lyrics appears to be a direct reflection of the words/title. Was that intentional?
During the writing and recording for this record I would send lyrics to Andy Cummings. He did a great job and our conversations about the visuals in relation to the lyrics and music were inspiring and intentional.

What's going on with your side projects, Ballz Deep and Emotron?
Rumor has it that Ballz Deep is currently recording their follow up to "LeComton's Most Wanted" in a mobile recording studio. Emotron is busy with his remix of "Ram-Faced Boy" for The Esoteric's remix album, and is also fielding offers from labels to put out his "90's Dance Party."

The band pic in "With The..." is pretty damn suave, I mean some straight up "Swingers Of Lawrence 12 month calendar" style. Where was that photo shot and whose idea was it?
Thanks. . . I think. The photo was shot in Lawrence at the haunted and historical "Eldridge Hotel on Mass. St. It was our friend and photographer Selena Salfen's idea. To see more of her awesome ideas check out selenasalfen.com

What are your touring plans for the rest of '05?
In August there are some Warp tour dates on the east coast.

Shout outs?
Thanks to everyone for the love and support, we will see ya soon.

Port Amoral
Jade Dead Eyes
Silent Planet Recordings

When I first heard about this band, I knew it contained an ex member of Figure Four and figured Port Amoral would be in the same vein. How wrong I was. I definitely love Figure Four, but I'm really glad this band elected not to follow that bands hard edged old school vibe. Instead, Port Amoral play melodic thrash metal not far off from newer groups such as Trivium, Shadows Fall, and Light This City, as well as taking cues from classic outfits like Kreator, Exodus and Testament. Yeah, you guessed it: tons of bone ripping solos, riffs that you can really sink your teeth into and throaty vocals that go straight for the jugular. Very upbeat and good stuff. Some of the tracks kind of run together, but that happens sometimes with the often repetitive nature of metal, especially thrash metal. Still, Port Amoral do their best to mix things up and do a pretty damn good job of it. The production is clear but with a raw sheen, and the layout is solid. The thing I like most about Port Amoral is how melodic they are. Even when things get brutal, they still keep the harmonies intact. If you enjoy the aforementioned acts, check these Canucks out.

Cephalic Carnage
Anomalies
Relapse Records

Everyone's favorite pot smoking purveyors of "Rocky Mountain Hydro Grind" are back with a record chockfull of offbeat lyrics, inhuman drumming, searing vocals, and pure metal madness that if it could be distilled into alcohol form, you know it would be of the highest proof. Cephalic Carnage have been doing this for quite a few years, and in that time continue to hone their skills and make one quality record after another. While not every single song astounded me, "Anomalies" is probably the most accessible Cephalic out so far. The ganja loving Colorado based gang throw out a couple curveballs when they dive into melodic leads, foray into real audio weirdness (even for them), and make some music that could dare be called "straight forward." Tunes like "Dying Will Be The Death Of Me," "Counting The Days," "Litany Of Failure" and "Kill For Weed" are perfect examples of this and real album standouts. Matching the more mainlined musical approach, some of the lyrics divert from the usual outline of sometimes nonsensical and avant garde wording. The previously mentioned "Kill For Weed" and "Counting The Days" are both interesting reads, as are other tunes here. And if that wasn't enough, the albums finale' "Ontengy Of Behavior" unravels from the clean, enchanting intro into a chaotic descent that ends in bloodshed and white noise, while creepy vocal effects work their way into the mix. The booklet is beautiful with images inspired by Lovecraft, medical science, modern art, and even an actual photo of a ghost which graces the cover. If you liked Cephalic Carnage before, you won't be disappointed. To those who couldn't get into previous offerings, give this one a try; I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.



The Zimmerman Note
New Deception
Innerstrength Records

PA continues to kick down the door with first rate hardcore/metal and one of the fastest rising stars from the state is The Zimmerman Note. The record is interlaced with the sounds of warfare (and their moniker is a WWII term), while TZN themselves play with the force of a full bore military attack; a complete and utter sonic blitzkrieg is what's contained within "New Deception." Akin to groups like Unearth, Black Dahlia Murder and If Hope Dies, TZN do metalcore right, steeped in a strong mid 90's style where the focus was more on undeniably evil sounding riffs and technical grace, than these days which are filled with clown make up and E-chord mush. There are still some killer breakdowns and awesome two step parts, but the band sticks to writing material that will set the dancefloor off, but also comes across good on record. Stellar bass playing and excellent drumming build a brutal base, while the catchy riffs and cathartic vocals hit like a hurricane. Thoughtful lyrics, awesome layout, and a decent production tidy up this package nicely. Labels; sign this band now. With a quality disc like this, these kids aren't going to be unknown for long.

Antagony
Rebirth
self-released

After many years in and out of the NorCal scene, Antagony return with an astonishing new effort, appropriately titled "Rebirth." Similar to area acts such as All Shall Perish, Hacksaw To The Throat, Animosity and Suffokate, these five lads play a devastating brand of deathcore, featuring ripping leads, neck snapping speed, brutal breakdowns and howling vox that just as quickly disintegrate into demonic depths. "Rebirth" features 7 tracks in about 40 mins, so this record has got a lot to offer, including a tune that tops nearly 12 mins! Most of the tracks are of decent length and Antagony does a good job of keeping things diverse, though in this genre that isn't always easy. A nice interchange between mosh parts and technical showmanship is displayed. I really dig the basswork, especially on "Hybrid", with tight drumming to back it up. Lots of different guitar parts, all solid, while the vocals are always in your face. Lyrics are good, with one song completely in Spanish and even though I don't speak Spanish, I think it's rad when bands do songs in another languages or their native tongues. Makes sing a long opportunities difficult a lot of the time, but it adds another dimension to hardcore/metal that is often absent. In terms of production, well the fact is, Zack Ohren is just the best. No matter what the budget or band, Castle Ultimate does things right, and "Rebirth" is made even better with the Ohren treatment. Artwork/layout are nothing to write home about, but are above par for a self released record. It's good to see Antagony back, especially since they really have overhauled the band and stepped it up in every way. Strains of death/black/thrash/doom metal interweave with the hardcore assault and offer up a little something for every extreme music fan.

Belphegor
Goatreich-Fleshcult
Napalm Records

The Satanic War Machine that is Belephegor conquers onward, crushing everything in its path, and at an astonishing pace. This follow up to last years incredible "Luciferus Incestus," Belphegor show no signs of slowing day with their blasphemous blend of darkly melodic, death embraced black metal. Helmut and Co. have an immense gift for delivering high voltage heresy, letting loose the hounds of hell, yet being able to keep the chaos controlled.

Plenty of harmonies arise amidst the heavily layered blast beats, demonic rasps/bellows, and impressive six and four string work, giving the whole record (as with their previous work), a very orchestral feel. Like their previous outing, "Goatreich" is awarded an excellent recording, to match it's gladiator grade riffs, compisition and vigor. Personal favorites include "Fornicationium," "Sepulture of Hypocrisy," "Swarm Of Rats," and the title track. While plenty of hyperblast moments occur and there is enough speed on this disc to satisfy an entire mass of tweekers, Belphegor not only showcase their aforementioned dedication to truly intense songwriting, but also vary things up enough to give this the epic feel the grandmasters like Death, Nile, Morbid Angel, Emperor, and Carcass all possessed in spades. Searing leads and bombastic battery rain down like Greek fire, but the presence of progressive tendencies and deep musical thought is never vanquished or unnoticeable. I found this to be the case especially on "The Crown Massacre" which begins with slow, distorted chords, but quickly accelerates into a full fledged sonic beatdown, yet remains littered with eerie passages, lending the real glare of evil that pushes "Goatreich" far beyond other black/death metal acts these days. Mark my words; Belphegor are the next big thing in extreme music.



Insidious Decrapency
Decadent Orgy Of Atrocious Suffering
Unmatched Brutality

Unmatched Brutality never fail in dispensing maximum strength death metal carnage, and their latest slew of high quality releases includes this gory little gem from Insidious Decrapency. An audio slaughterhouse filled with dripping slabs of detuned mayhem, punishing (electronic) percussion, and vocals that seem to puke up everything that is foul in this world. "Decadent Orgy" features eight originals (though these tracks were recorded in 2001) and a great cover of "Dawn Of Possession", which of course comes from the highly underrated death metal institution known as Immolation. Mastermind Shawn Whitaker doesn't reinvent the wheel, but there is undeniable talent and drive here, with plenty of rock solid riffs, steady progressions and sick vocals. Though many still debate the validity of utilizing canned beats for backup, Whitaker really does a good job in making things sound pretty fresh and alive, amidst the dead center onslaught of the organic instrumentation present on "Decadent Orgy." Like many Unmatched Brutality bands and their titles (and is the state of the genre in general), Insidious Decrapency straddle the line between purebred death metal and unabashed grindcore, though the former tends to win out in the musical tug of war, which I'm personally a much bigger fan of. Like I said earlier, you aren't going to find anything new on "Decadent Orgy" but a lack of life altering innovation doesn't stop this from being a record worthy of purchase. When it comes to the rising stars of death metal/grindcore, you can't go wrong with Umatched Brutality.

Peccatum
The Moribund People
The End Records

The booklet to "The Moribund People" is similar to past layouts from the prog heavy, goth potent experimental act Peccatum; stark images of flora, fauna, and snapshots of humanity steeped in nightshade, which is a perfect visual accompaniment to the musical output of Ihriel (Star Of Ash) and Ihsahn (Emperor). The opening cut, "The Moribund People," is quite simply breathtaking, and easily the bands finest accomplishment to date. Cast against a backdrop of strings, Ihriel's heavenly vocals project a serene state, before crashing into the melancholy (and unbelievably catchy) chorus, climaxing at the bridge where Ihsahn's harsh vocals and carnivorous licks kick in full force, before closing the piece with a somber refrain of the chorus. "A Penny's Worth Of Heart" is a mix of electronic mirth and majestic piano, topped off by Ihriel's enchanting siren call, and inter-spliced with Ihsahn's cathartic guitar and vocal work. The final tune on this all too short EP is a cover (though reinterpretation might be a more apt description) of the Bathory staple, "For All Those Who Died," which is divided into distinct halves, though the two are in the end more similar than different. Not simply because they are the same song, but because the slow ache of Ihriel's longing version is not far off from the bitter anger and angst that fills Ihsahn's portion, with it's primal black metal power that I'm sure would make Quorthon very proud. I have to admit that while I love Ihsahn's piece, Ihriel's somehow is so much more haunting and powerful. You really have to hear it to know what I'm talking about. As an added bonus, the video for "Moribund People" is included, which is somewhere in between a very horrible and cliche collage film student project and a profoundly moving artistic achievement, but I definitely enjoyed it overall. This is thus far the pinnacle of Peccatum's work; I only hope they will continue to go forward, exploring new territories and cultivating unseen midnight pleasures and morbid beauty.



Purified In Blood
Last Leaves Of A Poisoned Tree
New Eden Records

All hail the new kings of European "edgemetal": Purified In Blood. Like their forefathers in greats such as Slavearc, Purification, Maroon, Heaven Shall Burn, Arkangel, and Absence, Purified In Blood play bonecrunching metalcore with a strong social consciousness. Storming out of the gate with a two pronged vocal attack, pounding drums, brutal riffs, and excellent lyrics, Purified In Blood know how to bring the mosh, but don't become too breakdown happy, unlike many of their counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic. When the dancefloor parts come, they definitely seem an appropriate apex to the swirling rage of each song, and not just an excuse for poor playing. Purified In Blood also keep their punk and thrash roots intact, and it really comes across well and breaks up any occasional monotony, though their choice of samples and clips from movies could be better (I love the Boondock Saints as much as the next edge kid, but audio cuts from it are getting out of control). Thankfully the music is nothing but good stuff, and like I said before, the lyrics are worth a read. I'm just glad to see metalcore bands write about something other than broken hearts, bleeding skies and the ever popular enemy that is "they" and actually focus on real issues that affect human beings, animals and the Earth, pushing the cause of the vegan straight edge, a movement that is not new to the hardcore/metalcore scene, but still of vital importance. Even if you have no interest in becoming free of intoxicants and animal products/abuse, fans of first rate abrasive metalcore will love Purified in Blood.

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GODS

By Janelle Jones

That name!! Fantastic! How could anyone come across this moniker and not be intrigued? And lucky for those who decide to delve deeper into GODS and find out what they're all about, for they'll find some music that's pretty different than anything out there now. As showcased on their debut release, the 10-song 'I See You Through Glass' (Hand of Hope), the six-piece eschew the styles found in abundance in today's overly-saturated underground music scene, rather opting for an alluringly dark goth-inspired full-on, balls-to-the-wall rock sound that, although featuring primarily clean vocals from founder Jesse Smith, is aggressive and heavy. And as Jesse explains below, there's much thought behind the conflicted, personal lyrics as well. Yes, seems they have the whole package...

I have a nice clichéd question first, but I have to ask it because it's so interesting. What made you choose the name GODS?
When I started toying with the idea of leaving Zao and doing a different band, I was just thinking of names and that one came up. First of all, it just stuck out to me like it would draw some attention because it sounds sort of arrogant or whatever. [Laughter] But that's not the thing; it's not like we're "gods" or something – rock gods. No, it's just with a lot of the material I write about and kinda the way I feel about spirituality and life, I was thinking when I was writing the songs and after we started getting into the recording process and stuff, it's kind of reflecting on where we were coming from as a band. A lot of the stuff I was writing and a lot of the feelings I was having just basically from being in a Christian band and the things I've experienced is that everyone has a god or a vice, so it's not GODS as in we're gods, but GODS like heroin is a god or rock 'n' roll is a god or TV is a god. That kinda thing. It was funny 'cause my mom and all of Rob's grandparents and everyone was like, "Why are you naming your band that?!" [Laughter] They all flipped out about it, it was funny.

They thought it was blasphemous or something?
Yeah, they totally thought it was blasphemous, especially from the past music we played and the messages we were conveying and the bands we'd been in before. We tried to explain to them it was nothing blasphemous at all. We just thought it was a cool name.

Yeah, but that's why I said it was interesting because even the point you brought up first, it could sound arrogant. Yeah, you could take it different ways, but of course that's not what you meant. [Laughs]
No. We're the least cock-rock flashy band ever. [Laughs]

Also, of course you mentioned your previous band, and I didn't really wanna touch on this 'cause this is a totally new thing, but even just the bio I was sent, I mean, there's a lot of emphasis on Zao. Does that bother you?
Definitely does. That was something I kinda wanted to stray away from. It definitely was like shows, fliers, I didn't wanna ride the ex-Zao thing, especially since the band had so many members and I didn't want it to be that way. And when I got the press junket I was like, well, it's kind of a bummer it says what it says on the ads and the bio, but if it's used in a way to get somebody to check out the band because they like Zao and they end up liking our band, then that's totally awesome. But, yeah, it definitely kinda bothers me 'cause this is the farthest thing from what we were doing in Zao and it's a totally new thing and a fresh thing and I wish it could've been like that, but unfortunately I guess with the marketing stuff the label's doing, they felt that was the best idea.

Yeah, it can be positive and negative, I guess.
Yeah, I just want people to hear our music and if that's gonna be a tool to make that happen then that's a good thing.

I just wanted to know how you enjoy being a frontman.
It's cool. The whole thing started out just me writing the songs



and doing demos and stuff, and then it just turned into a full-on band with everybody writing new material for our next record already. It's cool. It just kinda ended up that way. Originally I was playing guitar and singing, then our guitar player moved up here from Florida and a couple other guys joined from a few hours away and it worked out. There are six people in our band, and everybody kinda does their own thing. We make it a point not to be this or that. Everybody's going off and doing their thing, so it's not like I'm trying to soak up the sun or whatever. [Laughs] Singing the songs and trying to have a good time and put on a good show for people. It's a good time. I actually hurt myself in the last month. We were playing a show in this little café in St. Albans, West Virginia, and I did a flip on the stage and fell and cracked my sternum in two places and broke a rib. The last month when we've been playing has been a little uncomfortable. So I'm kinda chilling. But it's cool; I like it. I enjoy it a little more than playing drums in a band, what I used to do.

Did you finish the set when you got hurt?
Yeah. [Laughs]

That's cool. Sometimes the adrenaline's pumping; you don't even know how bad [your injury] is.
Yeah, we were at this little pub, the side of it, having a couple drinks after the show I definitely knew I was in trouble. We ended up playing, though.

What got you into playing instruments in the first place?
I started playing drums around '94. As my musical tastes broadened, I started wanting to actually write more music, so I got into playing guitar and messing with keyboards, mainly just loving music. I grew up on bands like The Cure, Joy Division, and Depeche Mode, and sonically always liked how there was so much instrumentation going on. You can't necessarily write songs just from the drums in that perspective, so I just started playing guitar and getting into other instruments.

Were you self-taught?
Yeah, I never really had lessons. I've actually been thinking about going back to school to take some jazz theory and get into some jazz drumming and stuff, doing something a little different. I'd like to get some training, but financially right now I can't be in school.

You mentioned you had this material before you even had the whole band together.
Yeah, just working out of a small studio at my house, just playing all the instruments and writing it and figuring out mainly the direction when it became a band, where it was gonna go 'cause when I initially started most of the stuff I was writing was just absolute crap. Then I put out a small demo and got a couple guys locally that were playing with me and then [bassist] Rob [Horner], who used to be in Zao also, joined the band and it grew from there. It's cool now it's a whole band and we're doing everything together. That definitely took a little bit of the burden off me because other people are starting to write stuff and I want it to definitely be a band – not a solo thing.

You said the stuff you were writing initially was crap, but...
[Laughter] You're like, "I heard one of your songs; it's crap too!"

[Laughs] No, no...! But did you envision kinda how you wanted to sound, what style or in what direction you wanted to go?
Definitely. I'm a huge fan of goth kinda style stuff. I love [Marilyn] Manson and Nine Inch Nails, and I love H.I.M. and bands like that. Not necessarily the imagery so much – I was more gunning for that vibe. Initially the songs were a lot more mellow and a little more just sonically chilled out, and when we got into the studio it came out a little heavier and more aggressive than I had imagined it to. The new material we're working on now is even a little more aggressive, so it's evolved from being a little mellower to getting on the brink of heavy.

Well, even on this record, yeah, it's still heavy. But there's also a lot of beauty in it too.
Oh, that's awesome. Thank you.

But even like you mentioned earlier, like The Cure and stuff, Joy Division. I always found those bands, the melancholy stuff has a lot of beauty in it.
Yeah, definitely. I knew we were signing to a hardcore and metal label and I didn't necessarily just because we'd gotten signed to that type of label want to totally alter the sound to just being a hardcore band, with obviously the scene blowing up as huge as it has and all these bands coming to the forefront with stuff they've been doing forever, I kinda wanted to come out of the chute with our own sound. And hopefully I'm not being arrogant by saying that, but I think we have definitely our own sound going on and we wanna stick to that.

So how long did it take you to write the songs for the album?
'I See You Through Glass' came out June 14, [and] I started working on the stuff for that about a year ago and we recorded it in December. It's taken forever to come out, so it's been creeping on half-a-year. I had written three or four of the songs before signing with the label and just wrote the rest of them after. I'm constantly working on music and writing. It's nice having a home studio or anything just to





record with because you can constantly be putting ideas aside and thinking about the future. I wrote it in probably six months. We tracked 13 songs and ended up putting 10 on the record.

Why didn't the three others make the cut?
We just decided, like Andreas Magnusson (who recorded and produced the record), we all felt it was a more solid record sitting at about 30 minutes and 10 songs, kind of stylistically defining what we were doing across the board. Didn't wanna put too much on our first record.

Was there any meaning behind the track order?
Yeah, a little. I sequenced it in a manner that lyrically it kind of flows up and down. Lyrically some of the stuff I'm talking about is kind of schizo in the way that one song will be kinda positive and the next song kinda defeats what I was talking about in the song before it. [Laughs] So we kinda put it in an order. Nothing all planned or whatever, but yeah, we wanted it to kinda move and flow a certain way.

Okay. You just mentioned about lyrics. Yeah, it definitely seems a very personal record.
Yeah, and in the future I kinda wanna maybe get away from that so much, but yeah, definitely personal.

Also like you said, some are positive and some defeat whatever, but I was gonna say some songs like "5 Easy Steps to Fame and Fortune", it just seems confused even within that song.
[Laughs] Yeah, definitely.

Has your worldview changed over the years?
I don't know. I grew up in West Virginia and it's a complete shithole; it's totally it's own little place. People here are definitely not a part of what's going on in pop culture and there's not much of a music scene. I started touring when I was like 18 and we toured the U.S. like 45 times and went to Europe, getting to see what's out there and then constantly coming back here, it's kinda – not defeating what you're doing, but it kinda beats you down. You get back and no one really in the city where I live (there's like 200,000 people) it's just really small, hard-working middle-class and just the older I've gotten, I definitely used to be a lot more jaded and hateful and confused and run off at the mouth, but growing up in a place like this, I'm happy for what I have. I don't think my worldview has really changed, but spiritually I've definitely changed the way I think and feel about everything. I grew up in a strict Pentecostal home and never had the church shoved down my throat or anything like that, but the older you get, you know, I'm 28 and am married and have two children, so that obviously has changed a lot of my perspective with having children. I don't know; I obviously have my own personal politics and I have no agenda with any of that. I guess the older I've become, I definitely have realized the – I wouldn't necessarily call it lies, but I guess the false hope of specifically Christianity and just basically the false hopes of everything... I don't know if I'm rambling or making any sense at all.

You just got to something interesting: false hope of Christianity...
I'm not saying I don't believe. I'm definitely personally a believer. But [I'm] coming from a band that was a Christian band and then going to a band that has no agenda like that. I think a lot of kids with anything – it's not just Christianity – there's a false hope we pump into our youth of like, go to college and you're gonna be successful or become a Christian and everything's gonna be okay and it's gonna fix it. And you're gonna get real zealous and go to church and get a new bunch of friends, and then you're gonna turn around a few years later and they're gonna sell you out like everybody else did. Not necessarily the belief system, just [in terms of the] lifestyle. We still play to a lot of those kids that were into the kinda music we did before and they ask me what I think and I tell them [that] I still totally believe, but I'm not a Christian. I'm a believer. But that name has a strong connotation and if you're gonna call yourself that, then you should definitely live up to that... We're not a god-hating band, but obviously since I wrote the songs and wrote the lyrics, a lot of it's about my struggle with growing up as a Christian and the way I feel now. It's all over our record and just how I feel definitely let down by the church and just let down by a system I thought was going to work to edify my life and it completely hasn't. But at the same time, I haven't lost my belief in god...

But that definitely comes across on the record. The lyrics just feel very troubled...
Yeah, I think I'm pretty troubled personally [Laughs] No, I just think too, I know the lyrics are very personal, but at the same time I think there are a lot of people out there that can relate to what I'm getting at. It's just like the name of the band. Everybody serves something in their life, whether it's money or themselves; everybody has some sort of operating system and some sort of belief system, whether it's in fuckin' Mars or Buddha or Jesus. I think there are a lot of people out there like me that are totally confused. That's what they want for their life and that's what they'd hope for, but a worldview – on that question – life is beautiful and awesome but at the same time it sucks and there's nothing fair about life at all. You can get into creation and all that stuff and be like, I was created in god's image and I'm here for his enjoyment and this life where I'm gonna have to put up with all this shit and it's all based on whether I go to heaven or hell. That's room for troubled lyrics, but at the same time there are songs on the record about my life, about how life is good...

...What are your hopes for this band?
Just to play, tour full-time. There's a lot of sequences and stuff on the record and we're getting into trying to do those live, where we have live sequences going and we're getting the equipment for that and getting into some lights and stuff. We're gonna try to build it up to where it's a little more of a visual kind of show. Just stay on the road. We'll be hopefully getting into the studio to do our second record some time, which is whenever the label's ready. Most of it's written. We're shooting a video [for "If the Bet Is Love I Fold"] in Detroit soon, so hopefully that goes to Fuse and they can do something with it. I really wanna try and concentrate on the fans and people that like what we're doing. ...When we get them. [Laughs] Establishing a relationship with the people that appreciate what you're doing. I think it's a shitty place to fall into where you don't give a damn about the people that care about your band and come to see you and get caught up in what you're doing. We wanna make the people that like our band a focus definitely.

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Darkest Hour





By Tracey John / Photos by Janelle Jones

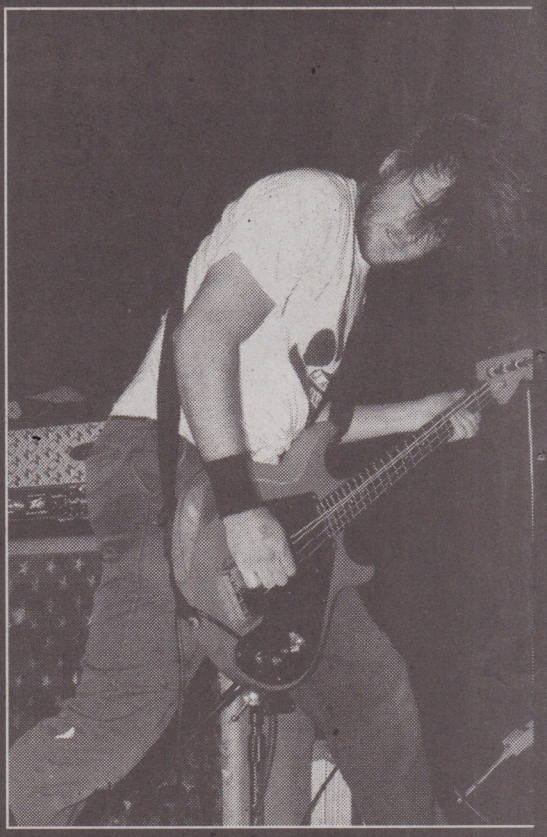
"I should've gone to law school," declares Darkest Hour guitarist and chief mouthpiece Mike Schleibaum. Lately, the D.C. metal band has had more than their share of run-ins with the law. For starters, when the group was at their practice space in Richmond, Virginia, concerned neighbors called 911—they thought that some poor soul was suffering cruel and unusual punishment when it was really just singer John Henry "screaming his nuts off" as he was tracking his vocals. To boot, the band is currently due for a court date because the size and registration of their new tour van doesn't adhere to strict homeland security regulations. "Apparently it's really complicated to own a vehicle in Washington, D.C.," Schleibaum quips. "We just can't stay out of trouble with the law."



Their recent problems with law enforcement illustrate what Darkest Hour- rounded out by drummer Ryan Parrish, bassist Paul Burnette and guitarist Kris Norris- have been saying all along. Their previous disc, 2003's Hidden Hands of a Sadist Nation (the band's decidedly straight-ahead thrash album) condemns American culture with unapologetically scathing lyrics. While the band is still politically-minded, the lines are little more personal on their fourth full length, Undoing Ruin. "It's not that we've







put aside our politics; it's just that on this record we chose to say different things," Schleibaum explains, assuring that Darkest Hour still plan on being involved in political affairs whenever they can. "But music to us is expression of any kind, not necessarily just of the political nature."

Political or not, the latest form of Darkest Hour's musical expression is a metal masterwork that's their most compelling disc to date. With skullet-domed mastermind Devin Townsend of Strapping Young Lad at the production helm, it'd be difficult to imagine that they'd come out with anything less than greatness. Although still inundated with the band's intricate guitar parts and Henry's raspy growls, Undoing Ruin contains more diverse elements (like leads, slower tempos, acoustic interludes and more guitar harmonies) that add a certain "flavor" that wasn't there before. "I don't want to say it's like baking a cake," Schleibaum jests, "but it was like trying to find the right recipe and I think we found the right mix this time."

Mixing different styles of heavy music certainly runs rampant nowadays, but Darkest Hour have been doing it since their debut, 2000's The Mark of the Judas, when the only other bands playing Swedish style metal were actually, um, Swedish. "It's just natural that music styles grow and evolve," Schleibaum says of the current "metalcore" trend of American bands incorporating the Swedish sound. "But what we try to do is have different elements to the music that include punk, hardcore, metal and an atmospheric rock style. We try to blend so many different things that I would just say the music is what it is and the attitude of the band is punk."

With their punk 'tudes in tow, it's no wonder the Darkest Hour dudes can't avoid clashing with local law enforcement, particularly when it comes to promoting their new album. When the guys were taking press photos under a bridge on Pennsylvania Avenue, the police showed up and accused them of being terrorist spies. "They got a report that terrorists were taking pictures of the bridge," Schleibaum recalls. After being questioned and searched for over an hour, the band was finally free to go. "I wanted to get into it with the cops and tell them that if I can't take a picture of myself in front of a bridge near where I live, there's pretty much no freedom left," Scheibaum says half-jokingly. "But at the same time, we were totally fucking scared and we didn't want to go to jail!"

Although they avoided doing jail time, the trouble didn't stop there for these metal mongers: the very next day, their video shoot for a song called "Convalescence" caught the attention of New Jersey's finest. With barrels of fire and stacks of smoke rising from the shoot site ("a crazy fucked-up set" that resembled the movies Escape From L.A. and Road Warrior Schleibaum insists), anyone would have to notice. While the band was allowed to quickly finish taping the rest of their fiery video, they were under the stringent supervision of no less than eight uniforms. "It was definitely a new experience performing for a roomful of cops," Schleibaum says with a chuckle. "But it was still pretty fucking metal."

Indeed, you can't get more metal than multiple run-ins with the po-po. But after a decade of making music, Darkest Hour has seen just about everything. "We never thought that we'd make it this far," Schleibaum says with amazement. "One day we woke up—probably on some dude's couch—and we were like, 'Fuck, it's been 10 years! Who knew?"

RUSS RANKIN

July Entry:
VEGETARIANISM AND SUBJECTIVE MORALITY

It's funny the things I notice these days; things I was completely unaware of or happily oblivious to for much of my life. Humans are an odd bunch with our frequent quirks of observation and definitive degrees with which we apply our innate moral radar in our daily lives. One place where this dichotomy is especially striking (at least to me) is in our attitudes towards the unfortunate species of this planet which tradition and marketing have targeted for death and consumption as opposed to the ones we love and admire.

Before I became a vegan several years ago, I was just as immersed in this cultural paradox as the next guy. I grew up with cats and dogs which I loved and who were, for all intents and purposes, considered part of the family. If anyone had suggested that we ought to ship them away to be tortured, slaughtered and eventually consumed we would have been horrified and yet every night, on our dinner plates, there was the rotting corpse of some other kind, sentient creature who's only crime was being born into the wrong species. Hamburgers, chicken, seafood; it was all the same - culturally engrained as "food" and so, apparently, beyond question as to the moral or ethical merits of it's production and/or consumption. Being young and somewhat curious I can recall asking my parents about the finer points of how an animal would go from living it's own, peaceful existence to being chopped up and bleeding on my plate. These questions invariably perpetuated an awkward silence immediately followed by some fairy tale version of the deal wherein the "stupid" animal, resigned to it's fate, was only too happy to sign up for the slaughterhouse, content to play it's fateful role in the drama of life. I scarcely paid much attention to all of this at the time but, looking back now, I know a seed of doubt was planted in my consciousness.

Morality is defined as 'the rightness or wrongness of something as judged by accepted moral codes.' You don't have to be a religious person to know that the adage 'thou shalt not kill' is just basic common sense; we know that killing others is wrong. Therefore, in situations where killing is inevitable (war for instance), it follows that there will inevitably exist a moral paradox. The human brain, faced with having to commit an act it knows is objectionable, will search for some justification or rationalization in order to give itself permission to move forward. For example, a soldier knows it is morally wrong to kill but, in combat, he may be forced to take a life. The only way he can achieve this is to apply subjective morality to the situation. Subjective morality dictates that, in this case, it's ok to kill. The mind rationalizes the act as the product of some 'one time only' situation where special circumstances apply thereby rendering the act agreeable. It is only by applying these subjective moral sub-categories that we, as conscious human beings, can continue to function in a world where people (and animals) are killed every day. Soldiers are trained to think of their opponents on the battlefield as "enemies" rather than people just like them. To quantify the basic right to live of his enemy would hinder his ability to kill without mercy therefore, the soldier must be trained to think of his enemy as evil, wicked and without the basic right to life he would grant his wife, child or family pet.

I remember seeing the film 'Tommy Boy' when this idea first hit me. The two main characters are beside themselves with grief when they accidentally hit a deer with their car. They think the deer is dead and they are feeling horribly guilty and remorseful. This struck me as a typically moral response that any of us would have in the same situation. However, the subjective moral dichotomy is presented later in the film when these same two characters are at a restaurant ordering chicken wings and shrimp. I found it ironic: grief-stricken over the prospect of killing a deer yet ambivalent about consuming the dead, rotting carcasses of other species.

Another example is a friend of mine who eats meat. This same person was explaining to me that they disliked a neighbor of theirs because this neighbor used to kill gophers. My friend felt compassion for the innocent gophers their neighbor was slaughtering yet none at all for the countless innocents my friend has consumed over the years.

Meat products don't happen in a vacuum. When we buy them, we are perpetuating a system which thrives on torture and murder. To assume we ought to buy burgers or steaks for the simple reason that they exist is painfully ignorant in my view. You don't need to be a doctor to easily learn that the human body doesn't need to consume meat or dairy to be healthy. In fact, there is mounting evidence that humans are in fact healthier when our diets are free of these carcinogenic by-products of cruelty. They contain too much fat, too much protein and no fiber. They contribute too many of the health problems which have Americans on edge these days such as obesity, heart disease and various types of cancer. In a culture where we desperately count up cholesterol in our diets, it may come as a surprise to many people to discover that cholesterol is only found in animal products.

Morality is basically good judgment. When we willingly paint ourselves into these ethical corners wherein we must fabricate a rationalization or justification for behavior which, in our hearts, we know to be objectionable we are cheapening our humanity. To really acknowledge what our food choices say about our failing moral compass helps us to embrace it. To live without the self-deceit and hypocrisy of subjective morality is a true path to the elusive freedom and enlightenment so many of us search for yet never find.

My Friend George

The bumbling stupidity of the current president has become so pronounced that it is almost endearing. My displeasure at his public comments during his first term has given way to a sort of "Awww, ain't he cute?" kind of attitude.

I mean, I can't change the fact that he's the president. I voted for another candidate in both elections and I guess I have accepted that it didn't go my way either time. Indeed, there are some characteristics of Mr. Bush that provide him with a bizarre kind of everyman, bumpkin-esque charm which prevents me from being able to drum up any more really deep resentment towards him.

Every time he speaks in public he looks so frightened and awkward and I just love the way he pauses after delivering every tongue-tying line of rhetoric; waiting for the applause of his supporters, his collective pat on the back, as if they're saying "yea! Good job, slugger!"

Another thing I love about the president is his incredible stupidity. I'm serious! It takes a special kind of man to be surrounded by some of the most brilliant and savvy political minds of our time and yet remain so consistently clueless. Once the initial alarm of discovering that the man placed in the highest position of the executive in this country is about as clever as a bag of hammers begins to wear off, one may begin to envy his simplistic world view. To be untroubled by the problems facing the country or the planet, to be able to curl up at night in that big, presidential bed with his 'commander in chief' pajamas (I picture him wearing that one piece kind with the plastic on the bottoms of the feet) and drift off to a blissful sleep – who wouldn't envy that?

Still, the hits just keep coming. I found this on the democracy now! Website (www,democracynow.org). only a man as brilliantly inept as George W. Bush would make a statement like this.

> **Bush: Iraq War Will Be Seen As "America's Golden Moment"**
> President Bush said Tuesday that he was "pleased with the progress" in Iraq and later agreed that the Iraq invasion will someday be seen by historians as "America's golden moment." Bush's comments came during a morning news conference at the White House. But the fighting continues on the ground in Iraq. The governor of Anbar province was found dead on Tuesday – three weeks after he was kidnapped. And the month of May ended with the U.S. losing 77 soldiers – making it the deadliest month for the United States since January. To date just over sixteen hundred fifty U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq.

Deep Throat

The nation is still reeling from the revelation that former FBI Assistant Director Mark Felt is "Deep Throat," the secret informant who helped Washington post reporter Bob Woodward break the Watergate scandal. Now the talking heads on the 24 hour news programs are debating whether or not he was a hero or a traitor. The Nixonites are coming out of the woodwork to demonize the guy while the democrats are extolling the necessity of the concept of a whistle blower in an age of boundless power and I mean, really now; the guy is like 100 years old. Let's leave him alone huh? In my view, people like Mark Felt are the only thing that stands between something resembling a functioning democracy and a totalitarian state. The people entrusted to the highest offices in this country need to know that they are accountable; even if isn't through traditional channels. Indeed, there are those who have deceived and purposely avoided the just eye of our democratic processes and I believe it is from these people that we have the most to fear. Pat Buchanan needs to get over it; his boss got caught.

I highly recommend the film "all the president's men" which tells the whole story of the Watergate break in and the subsequent events which led Woodward and his partner Carl Bernstein through a fascinating maze of corruption and secrecy and, eventually, to the oval office itself. The scandal climaxed in president Richard Nixon's resignation from office; the only president in history to take such action.

One benefit of all the media coverage of this story, however, is that Monica Crowley, the blonde vixen who co-hosts MSNBC's "coast to coast," has said "deep throat" like 500 times since yesterday and, every time she does, I giggle like a 6th grader.

Gay Pride Month

June was gay and lesbian pride month and I found myself thinking about my own

RUSS RANKIN

attitudes and how they've evolved over time. I think this is as good a time as any for us all to examine this topic and ask ourselves where we stand and what this topic means for all of us whether we're gay, straight or somewhere in the middle

The history of gay pride month dates back to June 27th 1969 in New York City. Patrons of a nightclub called the Stonewall Inn were being consistently harassed by the police. The Stonewall had a largely gay and lesbian clientele and they rightly assumed that they were being unfairly targeted for harassment due to little more than their sexual orientation. Tensions continued to mount and, on this particular night, they fought back. Several arrests and a media scandal later, the events of that night became known as the 'stonewall rebellion' and served to mobilize the gay community, not only in New York but nationwide.

Gays realized that as long as they continued to be seen as a shadowy subculture on society's fringe they would continue to suffer harassment and abuse from the intolerant and uninformed. By placing themselves front and center in events which celebrated the positive impact they had on their communities they felt they might erase the negative stereotypes which all too often served as the spark which could flare into homophobia.

We're Americans. Unfortunately, this means that it is somehow encoded into our subconscious to belittle and destroy anything we don't instantly understand. Look at the way we behave in the world at large. If we can't make sense of your culture or religion we will ridicule, boycott or just plain decimate you. This attitude seems to trickle down to everything we do including the way we relate to one another on a personal level. Everyone has had the experience of being different at some point. Maybe we didn't wear the right clothes to grade school or maybe we had to wear glasses; maybe we were always one step behind the other neighborhood kids in the "cool toy" arms race. We all understand the ridicule and scorn which seems to accompany any differences we might have, however temporarily, with our fellows. That we are unable to empathize, based on our own experiences, with people our peers deem "different" or "wrong" is unfortunate and, in some cases, tragic.

Mathew Shephard was a college student in Laramie, Wyoming. He was, by all accounts, a good kid, an above average student and a great friend to many. He was also murdered by a group of his fellow students because he was gay. This incident is symptomatic of a deeper epidemic of Ignorance; one which compels otherwise stable individuals to react out of fear and hatred when confronted by something (or someone) they don't understand. What is it about homosexuality that frightens us so and why does our culture seem to embrace and reinforce this negativity rather than replace it with tolerance and understanding?

I'm straight but I grew up in a liberal, diverse community which boasts the second largest per capita lesbian population in the country. I never really thought much of seeing same-sex couples until I hit junior high school where I learned that it wasn't 'normal.'

Later, in my teens and early twenties, it became common for me to unconsciously use homophobic slurs to insult my friends. "You fag" or "You're a fag" became a crucial part of my lexicon. Anything I didn't like then became "gay." Without even really stopping to think about what I thought about gay people I was attaching a negative context to them every time I opened my mouth. I was clueless as to how irresponsible and potentially hurtful this language was. I never even bothered to consider whether or not there might be a gay or lesbian person within earshot of me.

In time I learned that this was the kind of language gays and lesbians had to deal with everyday and, unlike when I said it, it was all too often followed up by violence and venomous prejudice. I realized that, while I didn't really have any issues with gay people, my irresponsible language was rendering me part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Did I really want to perpetuate this homophobia and further the regression of tolerance and understanding? Surely an intelligent guy such as myself could find some new and exciting ways to jokingly insult my friends.

It took some practice to unlearn the habit of throwing these hurtful terms around but I eventually did it. Now I cringe inside when I hear otherwise good people tossing these same epithets around and I can only hope that they will someday come to the same realizations I did. I still have no problems whatsoever with gay people but today my words match my feelings. I believe that we all ought to have the same rights to life and happiness and I also believe that love is never wrong.

This June, maybe we all ought to take a long look at our own interactions with the gay community. Are we loving, supportive and tolerant? Are we seeking to understand rather than be understood? Are we afraid of people who we've been socially conditioned to think of as 'different' and, if so, why?

On Insurgency

In the waning months of 2005 the news from Iraq is still as bad as ever. America's young servicemen and women are being picked off by snipers and blown apart by roadside explosives on a daily basis. Young lives, full of promise; often with spouses and children at home. These military families are perhaps the most symbolic portraits of the paradox of war. They put on the brave face of blind patriotism, flags waving in front of the house, stickers and magnets on the family car trumpeting support for the cause yet all the while praying to their Christian gods for the rapid return of their loved ones. Down deep they don't care if the 'war' is won or lost, they are indifferent about the politics of it all; they just want their own, small part of it to come home.

Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz once reflected that war is "the extension of politics by other means." In practice this view renders the average soldier little more than a means to an end and, tragically, an end the soldier himself is often unaware of. That so many young American lives are violently snuffed out in the far reaches of the world is tragic enough; that these people can seldom even draw on some final justification to assuage their dying moments; some unwavering sense that their life is indeed ending for some greater good, is unconscionable. Just what are the politics that, in a Clausewitzian view, this latest war is the extension of? Mired so deeply into this costly foreign occupation it is often difficult to imagine our way of life before it happened. Was it necessary? Was it in the interests of democracy? What exactly are we doing there?

The American corporate-owned media, always complicit in proffering a view of the world which will further elite interests, have spun this war so many different ways that the average citizen may be at a loss to recall who even fired the 'first shot' in Iraq. First, there was the certainty from those in power that Iraq's president was involved in the attacks of September 11, 2001. Preying on the grief and horror of those events, President Bush began preparing for an invasion of Iraq almost immediately (despite the absence of any evidence of its involvement) and calling on his friends in the media to begin demonizing Saddam Hussein. With the drum beat to war intensifying yet still lacking evidence linking Iraq to the attacks, the Bush administration had to quickly fabricate a new rationale for military action. Americans were then presented with the dubious specter of what the administration called 'weapons of mass destruction.' The pitch was that Iraq had tons of them and was planning to use them against the United States. This threat, preposterous as it was, struck a chord with a frightened nation still reeling from 9/11 and the President finally had his war.

More than two years later, Iraq is still in a state of general anarchy and its citizens seem largely disinterested in the western democratic government which has been forced upon them at gunpoint by the United States. Mr. Bush chalks it all up to their seemingly built-in hatred of freedom. The Iraqis, who, unable to be heard in the world forum, have taken up arms to resist the invading armies, have been dubbed 'insurgents' by the Bush administration. The Iraq war has dissolved into a hit and run guerilla conflict pitting these insurgents against an invading force bent on subverting the indigenous population to a virtually empirical set of rules.

That the White House chose the word 'insurgents' as their latest phrase du jour to describe people who, in their words, "hate freedom" is the ultimate irony. Just what is an insurgent? A definition I found is 'somebody who rebels against authority or leadership, especially somebody belonging to a group involved in an uprising against the government or ruler of a country.'

This reminds me of a group of so-called 'insurgents' who dug themselves in and battled an invading force of superior numbers who were trying to compel them to submit to a foreign government's empirical rule. This happened in the late 1700's and it happened here, in the fledgling British colonies which later became the United States. These heroes helped to define freedom as we know it in this country; that the cause of freedom to self-determined governance was one worth fighting and dying for. Is this so different from the reasons the indigenous Iraqis still resist our invasion and occupation? It doesn't take a brain surgeon to see that the so-called Iraqi government's make up is mostly American-educated, Bush administration puppets. "Yes" men whose sole function is to legitimize this occupation as an exercise in democracy when it is, in fact, a massive business venture set to line the pockets of Mr. Bush's corporate friends (Bechtel, Halliburton, Blackwater, etc).

These insurgents don't "hate freedom," as the President claims; in fact, they may yet embody it's purest form: armed resistance and defense of their homeland against a foreign invader. They are actually using the same model of freedom that the founders of the United States used in their struggle for independence over 250 years ago.

It is worth noting the subjective use of terms like "freedom" that the Bush administration clings to as it's primary dogma. Freedom is defined as 'a country's right to rule itself, without interference from or domination by another country or power.' This sounds to me like exactly what the Iraqis are doing. Far from hating freedom they are embracing it. Each Iraqi citizen who dies in this conflict, whether they are civilians or armed combatants, will be able to draw their final breaths knowing they fell in defense of not merely their country but their entire way of life. For the American casualties there will only be one question: why?

RUSS RANKIN

August Entry:

SAME SEX MARRIAGE

After a bitter, two year battle "Bill c-38" was finally passed into law by the Canadian government making same-sex marriage legal across the country. The debate was long, some conservatives were in favor while some liberals opposed the legislation but, when the dust finally settled in Ottawa, the business of democracy was carried out.

Democracy, in its purest form, is a messy affair. It takes too long, too many people have too much power to pontificate and drag out the process but it is, as far as I can see, a fair and just system of governance. We Americans (and Canadians) like our freedom. We shudder to think of what life would be like under some fascist or totalitarian regime where we had no say in the running of the country and no representation whatsoever in any governing body charged with meting out laws and regulations.

Isn't it interesting then that we, the United States of America, the self-proclaimed junta of freedom and democracy, seem to be falling further and further behind the curve relative to our democratic brethren around the globe when it comes to actually practicing the very precepts of democracy that we seem to enjoy beating our collective chests about at every opportunity. Do we even know what we're talking about? I believe that this recent landmark decision north of the border puts our own democratic shortcomings in stark relief and that we, as a people, ought to seriously re-examine the degree with which we actually practice a true democracy.

Does the fact that same sex couples can now be legally married in Canada mean that the nation as a whole has fallen off the moral beam? Are the laws being drawn up and passed by unwashed, Molson swilling heathens? Of course not. Canada, like America, has a democracy which features the separation of church and state and, unlike America these days, Canada actually takes this seriously. There are thousands of Canadian Christians. Probably many of the men and women who are responsible for seeing Bill c-38 through to its historic passage are regular attendees at church on Sundays. The difference between us and them seems to be that these people understand that, while they may read the Bible and they may have certain Christian values and/or beliefs, that these have NO place in the business of running the country. The only documentation one ought to consider when passing national laws and referendums are the charters of that country.

Our Declaration Of Independence, for instance, really has no specifications on who ought to marry who. There IS a little bit in there about 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' But, as far as I can tell, it doesn't really specify anywhere that it only applies to heterosexual Christians. This isn't what the conservative right in this country would have us believe however. Apparently, these crazies feel that the King James Bible ought to be just as closely observed as the Declaration Of Independence or the Constitution when it comes to the laws of the land. This is where the line between church and state, a line that is emphatically understood and sacred in a democracy like Canada, for instance, becomes blurry in American politics. Just when and where did we, as a people, begin to allow this? Who was the first person in government to begin to proliferate the archaic, narrow morality of a sectarian religion into the stream of democratic governance?

Don't get me wrong here; this isn't about bashing the Bible or Christianity. I believe people ought to be free to worship (or not) in any way they see fit. I also believe that, in reading the Bible, it's possible for one to glean the makings of what we'd consider basic morality; thou shalt not kill, etc, but I definitely believe we are headed down a dangerous road when we begin to allow organized religion to start bleeding into the political arena. It doesn't belong there. The people in Canadian government understand that. Same sex marriage was the will of the majority of the population, an idea whose time had come. The MP's on both sides of the debate were able to put their own religious convictions aside in order to do the business of running the country. What do the people they represent want? What makes the most sense? What is the most practical avenue for Canada? These are the things they considered; not whether same sex marriage was in god's special plan or not.

To be in Canada (as I was at the time of this decision) was a real wake up call. How is it that we as Americans have allowed our democratic process to be debased and dragged through the mud of fundamentalist fanaticism? Is it our tragic lack of a free press? I mean, if the average American turns on the TV these days chances are they're going to hear a massive, one-sided barrage of vicious dogma from the likes of Bill O'Reilly and the rest of the conservative apologists which seem to have been handed free reign over our systems of communication.

When religious fanaticism spills over into politics we are all in trouble folks. Whether or not you think same sex marriage is right or wrong, shouldn't the people charged with representing us in the highest levels of government stick to the time-tested documents and charters which founded this country? If it's in the declaration of independence or the constitution then yeah, let's use it as a guide or, if we want to change the constitution, let's do it right – by the pure and yes – sometimes painfully slow, process of democracy; not by knee-jerk fanaticism and divisive hate-politics.

Ever Wonder?

Few things pass the time better than tripping out on some of the more random traits of the human condition. We are, admittedly, a strange bunch.

For instance; how many times have you been driving and become incensed with a fellow motorist? Maybe they didn't signal for a lane change or maybe they're just driving way too slow. When you finally have the chance to pass the offending roadster you slow down to look at them. Why? Come on, we all do it. What do we expect to see? Some ghoulish figure crouched over the wheel laughing demonically? Why do we always look?

I've recently noticed that I do the same thing when it comes to bumper stickers which stump for the conservative right agenda in this country. 'It's a child not a choice,' 'Support the troops,' 'Bush/Cheney '04.' I see these stickers (albeit infrequently; I DO live in Santa Cruz after all) and I want to see the person driving. I pull up alongside the driver and glance over and I'm not really sure what I'm hoping to see – maybe Bill O'Reilly or someone like that but I'm always disappointed. It invariably ends up being just some regular-looking person going about their business. It's laughable that I should expect someone to somehow look and appear so different from me simply because we have divergent opinions on politics or social issues.

In my head I'm always like "who the fuck could think that?! I'm gonna take a look and see what kind of person they are!" as if I'm going to somehow confirm my pet theories that all conservatives are lizard-skinned anthropoids hiding behind flag magnets and Jesus stickers. Just once I'd like to roll up on one of these pro-war bush-buggies and actually see something that embodies the characteristics my fertile mind is always attaching to these people. It would make it SO much easier to hate them!

I guess, after all, the first amendment ought to apply to "them" as well as me. I'm sure there are honest, hardworking people out there who believe that capital punishment is a good idea just as strongly as I believe that it isn't and so on down the line. I, for one, choose not to adorn my car with any kind of political or social sloganeering. Better to leave people guessing.

Are Americans Getting Stupider?

It just dawned on me the other day. I was at the movies on a normal, weekday afternoon and, after an on-screen prompt to "please silence your cell phones," the previews began. It's no secret to anyone who's been around awhile that Hollywood is rapidly running out of ideas. Comic book adaptations, endless sequels to or remakes of films nobody really cared about the first time around and, of course, the vapid, big-screen versions of scores of half-witted television shows from the 1970's and 80's. One such film was being previewed; it was a movie version of "The Dukes Of Hazard." It was so god awful that I actually began to feel dumber as the preview wore on, as if some unseen force was sucking my brain out through my eyes. Then someone laughed. Then another. Soon there were scattered chuckles from throughout the theater in response to the painfully clumsy sight gags and embarrassing dialogue in the trailer. It was a stunning revelation: these people weren't laughing at the absurdity of what they were seeing. They actually found it humorous!

My god! I must be dreaming. Surely I'll wake with a start, relieved to discover I'd only subconsciously slipped into this eerie nether region on the far, far

RUSS RANKIN

opposite side of the culture warp from where I would normally reside. But this was real. So, too, was the ringing of not one but three cell phones throughout the film. One chucko even felt compelled to fucking ANSWER his phone and talk for a while.

What the fuck is going on? Where is the consideration? How does an average adult get to a place where they deem it appropriate to not only leave their cell phone ringer on in a movie but answer it as well? I found myself pining for the "good old days" when all you had to worry about at the theater was someone whispering a little too loudly behind you or accidentally kicking your chair.

Maybe it's the shift in our culture away from each other. Increasingly, Americans are becoming more and more insular. We have the internet and an endless barrage of programming on television. Netflix brings movies to us so we don't have to go out and rent them anymore and we can order out for nearly every kind of food. It's not uncommon these days for us to have hundreds of "friends" we chat with online or correspond with via email or cell phone but our actual, face to face personal interactions seem to be on the decline. We get out of the habit of even the most basic considerations which, not long ago, were automatic in situations which butted us up against our fellows (airplanes, trains, buses and yes – movie theaters).

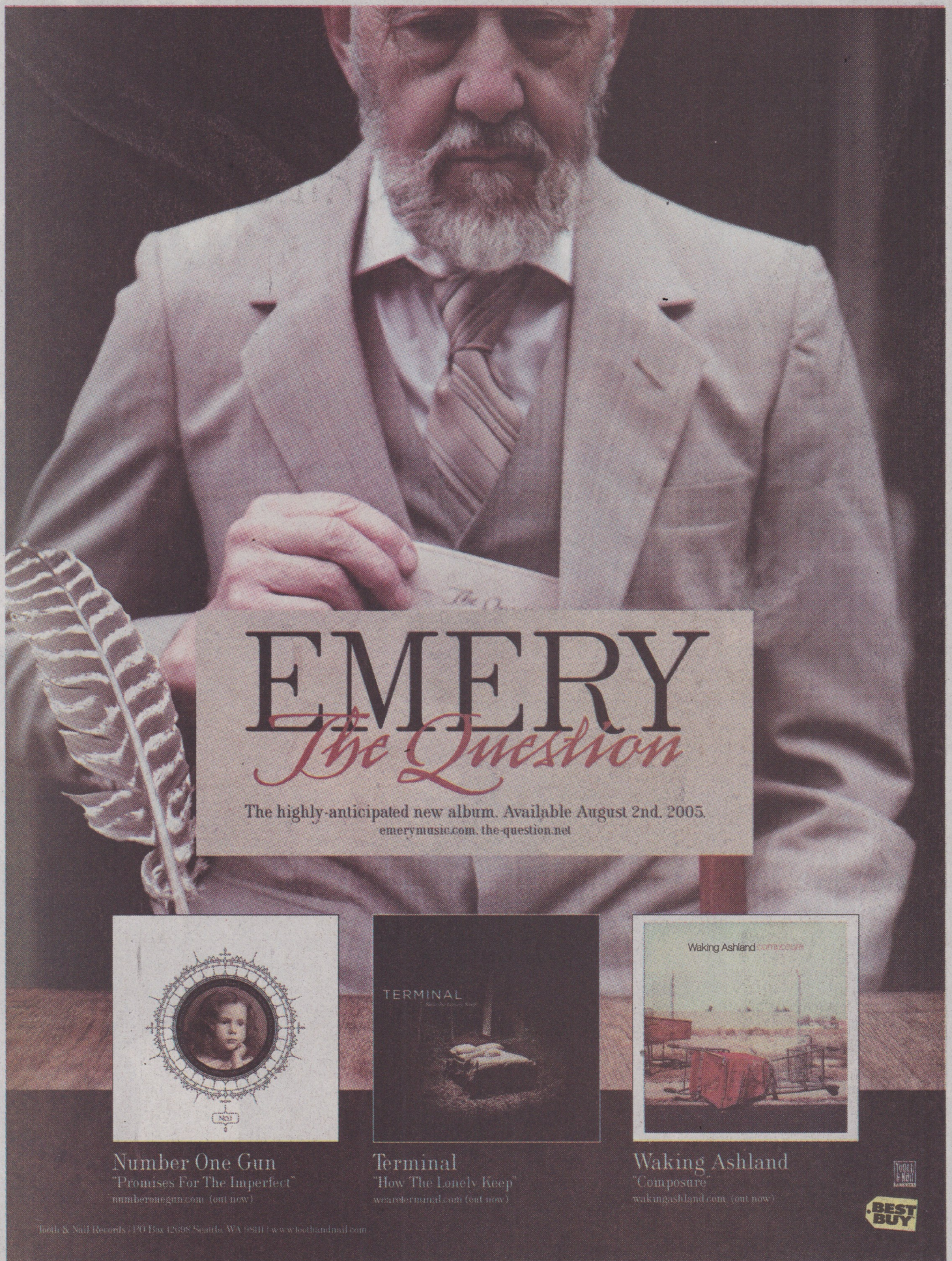
We stop interacting with each other. We allow our world view to become almost entirely shaped by the culture industry. Our collective consciousness becomes so dulled, so dumbed-down that we find the inane and unimaginative hilarious. Hence, a preview for a horrible re-make of a horrible TV show suddenly becomes the funniest thing ever. It's sad, really.

People who live in Manhattan, for instance, are stoked. They will never be able to slip into this kind of cultural isolation – there just isn't any room! Everything you do in Manhattan you do slammed up against a hundred other people so one is forced to co-exist and, ultimately, to consider those around them. Europe as well appears to be relatively safe from this condition as their various cultures all seem to embrace social interaction and hold it sacred. Everywhere you look people are meeting up in cafes and restaurants where meals last for hours as stories are told and friends catch up with each other's lives.

Yet here, in America, it seems we are witnessing the slow death of any real sense of community. We sit inside on our computers and manufacture an almost separate identity for ourselves. We never see or speak to anyone anymore in the context of the real world. We become caught up in trivialities and we rally behind trite phrases or dogmatic bumper stickers. We define ourselves in absolutes in a world that is anything but and we give ourselves more and more reasons to hide out in fear and mistrust of our neighbors; neighbors we ought to be hanging out with and sharing in the human experience. And the ruling classes love it. A frightened, untrusting populace is far preferable to a mobilized, community-based rebellion. The more people isolate and the more we don't trust our neighbors the better for these elites. Smothered in hate-based doctrine, we spend our energies trying to "weed out" the undesirable elements of our society. Better watch out for the gays! We'll all get AIDS and die or, worse yet, they'll marry each other and destroy the very fabric of our great society! Better watch out for the Mexicans! They'll steal all our jobs! Better watch out for that Arab family that just moved in down the street! They're all terrorists and they're going to chop off my head! The culture industry feeds into our collective paranoia, upping the stakes until we trust no one and, when this happens, the elite win. We expend all our energies hating each other instead of getting together and demanding that our freedoms be returned and that ALL Americans be able to share in life's blessings.




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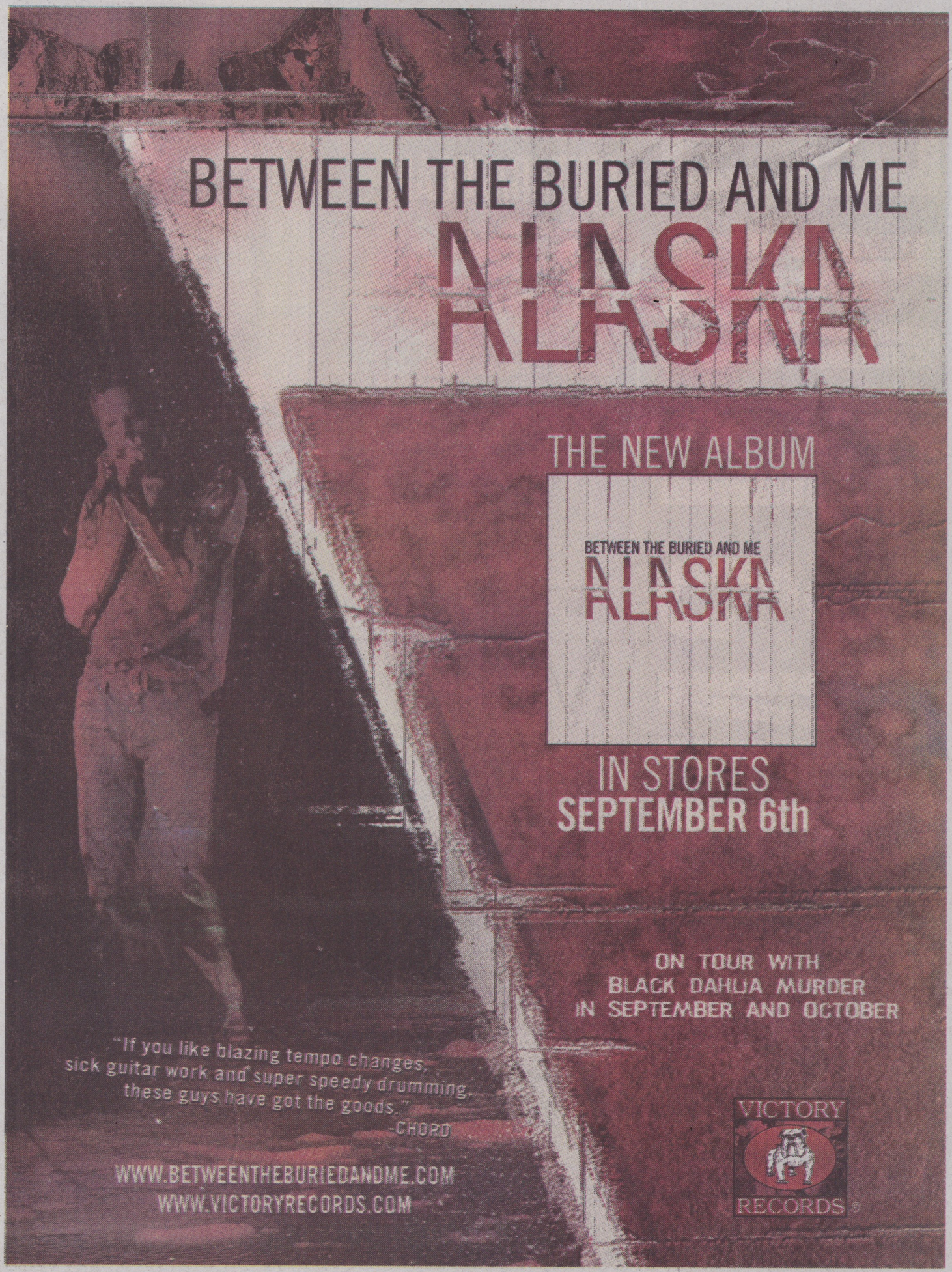
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AGAINST ME!

AN INTERVIEW WITH TOM GABLE, GUITAR/VOCALS

By Matt Cote

Three years ago, AGAINST ME! was a relatively unknown band from the punk rock hotbed of Gainesville, FL who had just released an LP on No Idea Records. That release, entitled 'Reinventing Axl Rose,' quickly became a punk rock favorite, showing a band that was ready to come into their own, creating a sound that was generally classified as folk-punk, and giving a nod to both BILLY BRAGG and THE CLASH alike. With a buzz about the band growing, FAT WRECK CHORDS came knocking, and the band had soon signed on, and late in 2003, released 'As The Eternal Cowboy.' A critical hit, the band only continued to gain steam and notoriety, something that will forever be documented in their DVD, 'We're Never Going Home.' The DVD showed a band who was at the top of their game, and at the same time being honeymooned by pretty much every major label in America. Having decided to pass on the tempting offers and free drinks being sent in their direction, AGAINST ME! have remained at FAT, and we are now here, three full years later, anxiously awaiting the release of their latest full-length, 'Searching For A Former Clarity.' While the chants and cries of 'sell outs' and 'rock stars' are sure to follow the band wherever they go from some of their early fans who can't accept the fact that the band's fan base has grown to a point that they would have never expected, I am here to assure you that they have not changed their sound one bit; the folk-punk sound is still alive and well, and truly better than ever. Having taken their sound to the next level and produced what is probably as close to a perfect CD as I've heard in the past five years, the sky is truly the limit for these guys.

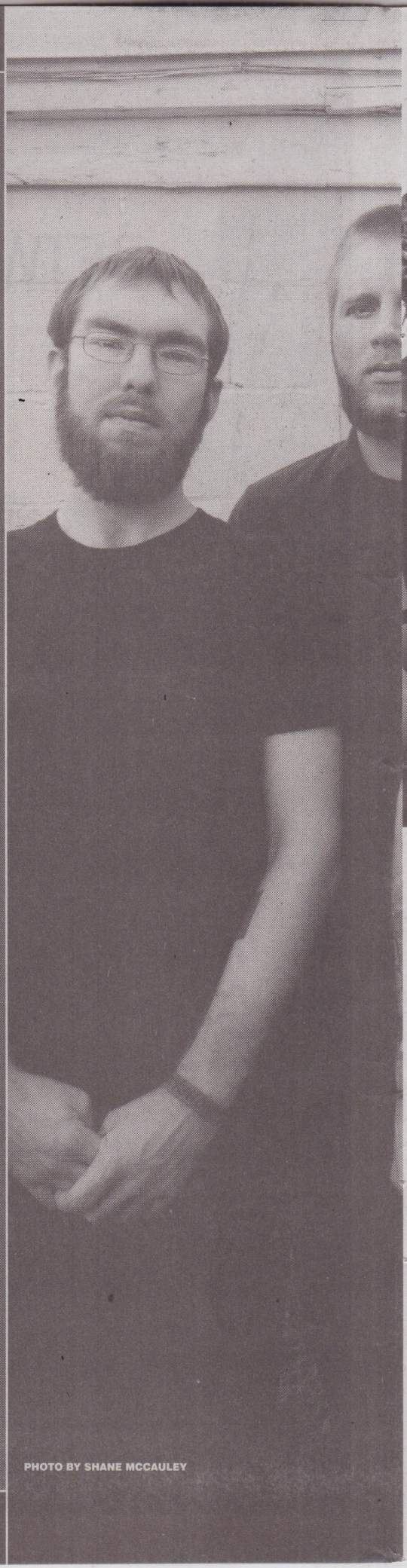


PHOTO BY SHANE MCCAULEY



So AMP hasn't touched base with you guys since the DVD came out. How's life been treating you the past 8 months or so?

It's been good. Right after the DVD came out we went back on tour for a little bit, but we were back home for the first half of the New Year. Then we went and were recording, and then did the whole Canada thing, and that's pretty much it. No complaints, you know?

So the latest CD is just about ready to be released, with a street date of September 6th. 'Searching for a Former Clarity' is your second release on FAT. How would you compare this release to 'Eternal Cowboy'?

I think Eternal Cowboy is 25 minutes long. It's 25 minutes long and we had to stretch the space in between each song to even make it that long. And this is 48 minutes long. For our standards or anything, it's epic for us. There's not even a song on there that's under 2 minutes, you know? It's the most proud I've been of anything I've ever done, by far, so I'm very happy with it.

You guys worked with J Robbins, who is often regarded as the premier producer in indie and punk rock. As a result, you guys have managed to create one of the most slick, smooth records I've heard in a while, and definitely the most well-produced of all your releases. How happy were you guys with the outcome?

As I said, I couldn't be happier. Overall, the working experience and recording with J was great. This is also the longest – usually you record a record and as soon as you're done you're just like 'ok, that's great, I'm happy' and then a month later you start listening to it and you start hearing these mistakes and things you wished you had done differently and they begin to haunt you from there on out. But at this point, it's been like 2 months since we finished recording, and I still feel totally at peace with the recording, you know? I'm just totally happy with it.

I've heard some people say that because of the style of music you guys have created, they prefer the grittier, less clean sound when you guys record. What do you say to people who point to the production value of this CD as compared to say Axl Rose, and say that that show that as you guys "selling out" or getting too big, or just feel as though it hinders your music rather than helps it?

I don't' really care, honestly. I'm making recordings that I want, the way that I want them to be, and I'm not necessarily trying to make anybody happy. I hope people can appreciate that, and I hope people can find enjoyment in them, but I'm not gonna make a shitty sounding recording just to make some people

happy because that's their idea of what punk rock should be. I just want to, you know – I want to record in a way that best captures what you're trying to do with the song. There's different methods to that, but as a musician, the idea of limiting yourself or recording in sub-par ways is just ridiculous.

So how did the writing process work for you – did you write while you were on tour,?
We demo'd maybe eight months or so prior to recording, and we wrote a bunch of songs while we had been on tour during the year before we recorded, and maybe 2 or 3 of those songs made it on to the record. And it was weird because, like I said, we took the first 3 or 4 months off of the year, and I rented a house here in Gainesville that had a basement and we built a practice space there and practiced five nights a week and really just hunkered down and wrote. And the majority of the record really just came in that time. It's just amazing, you know? Because it was just such a fruitful period of time, writing-wise. And it all just came so easy. We had this attitude about it, where we just wanted to come up with as many songs as possible and not really even think about it or limit ourselves by thinking about it while it was happening. We just wanted to keep writing and keep writing, and when we got to a certain point, we'd sit back and take a look at it and look at all of what we had and decide what to do with it, but not nit-pick certain songs to death, just sort of let it grow and see what it became.

You guys are on the road pretty much non-stop – so how soon after you finished recording did you get back out?
We left the day after we were done recording. We went and had our first show in Long Island, and then we did the full Canada run. It was weird, we did the whole Canada East Coast, all the way to the west, went down to San Francisco and hung out for a couple of days and then drove all the way back to Gainesville, and then flew back to Canada to play five more shows. It wasn't really the best planning, but it all worked out. And today we leave for Iceland and we're in Europe for a month, and when we come back from that we're home sporadically in August. But after that, we're on the road until December. And I'm fucking stoked.

So what does the title, 'Searching For a Former Clarity' mean?
Um, I don't think I'd like to nail it down to just one meaning. I'd like to let it be more interpretative for people and to let them make their own judgment on that. This definitely was...I've never really approached an album like this, where I had the album title first and then wrote songs with that album title in mind. So that was sort of cool for me, and I think it was really beneficial and I think it made everything really coherent and cohesive, but I'd kind of rather leave that open for people.

The CD itself has 14 songs, and truly shows the variety of styles you guys have managed to create and incorporate into your sound, and to me seems like a good mix of everything that AGAINST ME! has ever done in the past. Do you feel that that is the case?
Yeah, and I'm glad you said that. I feel that it wasn't even necessarily a conscious thing, but I was saying this to someone the other day, that a couple days ago I was listening to the record, and it sounds to me like we took the good elements from everything we've ever done and pulled them all together onto one album, you know?

This one is definitely a step above everything you guys have done in the past. Everything before this is good too, don't get me wrong – but it's definitely a step above.
Thank you, I couldn't be happier with the results. And that's a good thing because that means I get to sleep at night and not stay awake saying 'why didn't I do this???'

Which song, if any, on the CD can you point to and say 'that's exactly the way we wanted it to sound'? Is there any one song that stands apart from the rest for you guys?
As a whole, the entire thing we're completely content with. But it's weird, when you're in the band you judge songs on a different basis, because there's some songs that are really, really fun to play live and that's the way you pick your favorite songs when you're in the band. Like, for us, playing "Don't Lose Touch" or "Justin", they're a blast to play live, so they're our favorite songs. But every song, as I said, is the way we wanted it to sound.

So the lyrics on the CD again touch upon politics, something that you guys are now pretty well known for – being a band that's not afraid to throw their feelings about our current situation here in America and make it well-known that they don't agree with the way everything is being handled. Obviously, that is something that is usually well supported within the punk rock scene. Do you guys ever take any grief over your anti-establishment stance and statements?

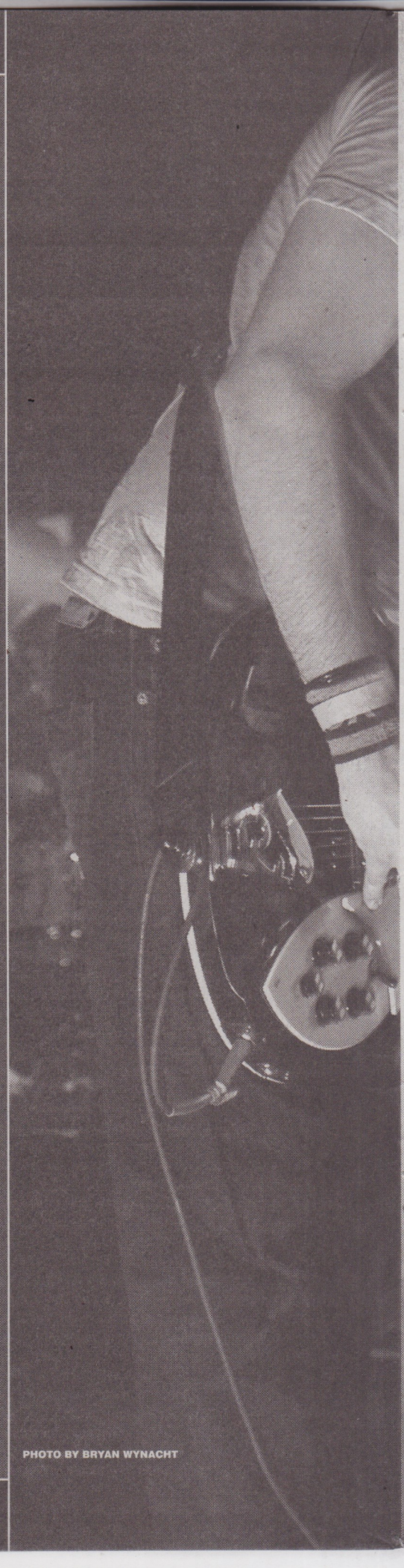
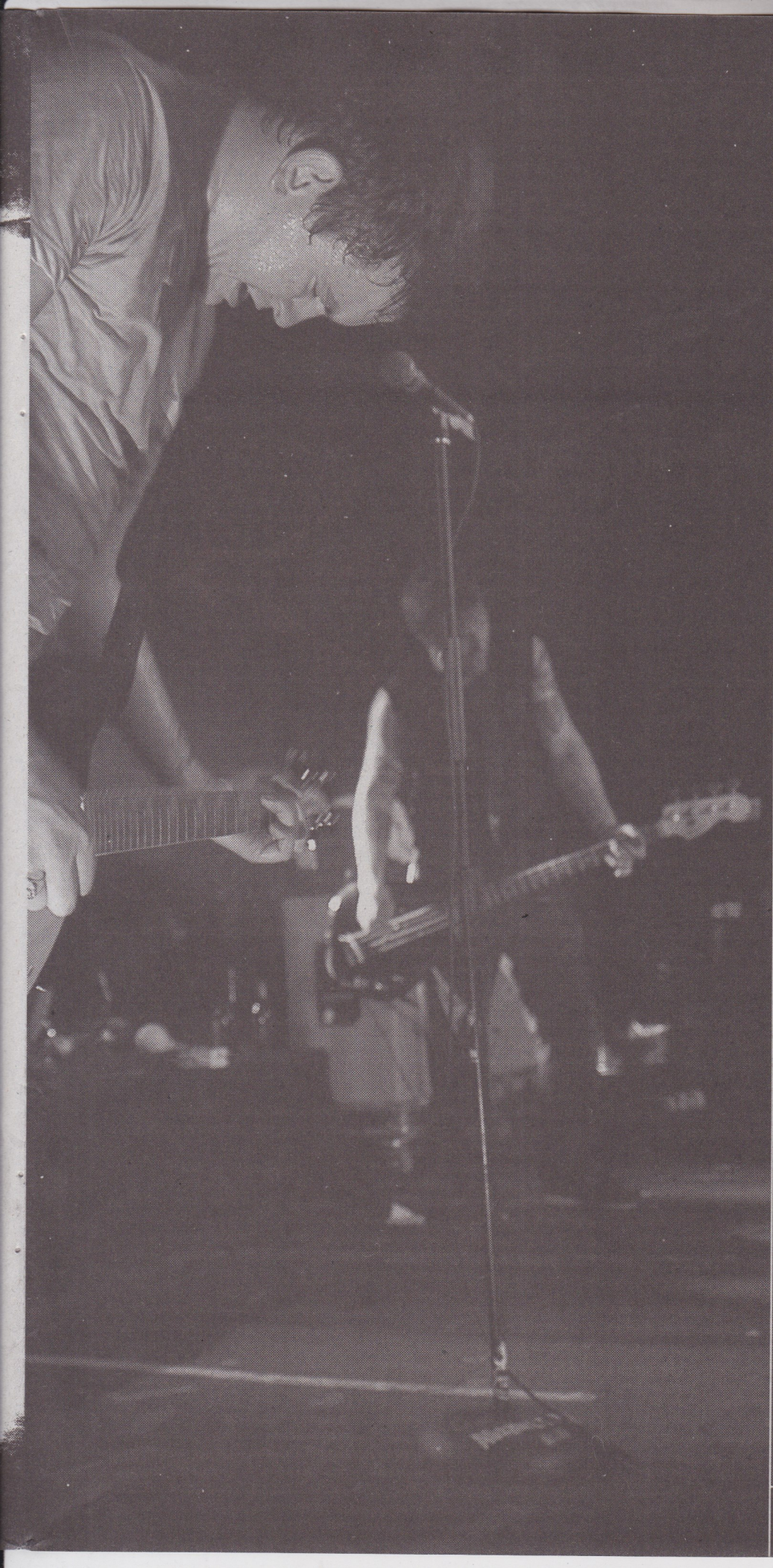


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Not so much for making the statements...you know, we got some grief from some people for being part of the Rock Against Bush and Punk Voter tours, but not so much people disagreeing with the politics, but more so we've gotten grief for supporting certain left-wing political movements or saying certain ideas, and people saying that they feel like we haven't lived up to those statements or ideas, or disagreeing with our methods. Which is unfortunate, in a way.

A good example of a song where you guys are questioning our foreign policy is "From Her Lips to God's Ears," with a chorus of "Condeleeza." I hope that most people listening to your CD will realize who you are singing about – but how often, if ever, do people tell you that they didn't necessarily know what one of your songs was about until they heard it, which lead them to educate themselves on the situation and become more aware of what's going on around them, and how does that make you feel?

We've definitely gotten a couple letters from random people over the years where they have been like 'I got into your band and it really made me aware and made me want to get involved and become more politically active.' And that's an awesome thing, and a relief. I guess one of the best things you can hope to get out of playing music is to be a catalyst and get people to be aware and to become more active on their own, you know?

Another song, "How Low," deals with the topic of late-nights drinking and gallivanting around town, behavior that you guys have never shied away from. Yet this song talks about trying to get away from that type of behavior. Is AGAINST ME! turning over a new, more sober leaf?

I've been sober since January. New Year's Eve, actually, haha. Yeah, so it wasn't because of that song or anything like that. I just haven't really felt like drinking or anything for a couple of months now.

Obviously a hot topic over the past year or so was the romancing of AGAINST ME! by the various major labels who came sniffing around, a time which was forever captured in the DVD last year. The song "Unprotected Sex With Multiple Partners" deals with the ideas and ideals of major labels, which you obviously learned from this experience. What was the purpose behind writing a song like that?

You know, it wasn't so much meant as a stab at other bands or anything like that, it was more just meant as a stab at my own mentality about certain elements and things like that in ways that I've thought and not been happy with.

It's a pretty honest song in saying the way that things are and the way things work, you know? Like, saying how much percentages go to certain people or things like that. And I'm not necessarily trying to make a judgment call, because a lot of it makes sense and a lot of it is just the way things are. It's meant more just as a stab at myself.

Have you guys had any further contact with any of the labels since their original interest last year?
I actually keep in touch with Tom McKaye, he's actually a pretty good friend at this point.

Has he ever seen the DVD and what did he think about it?
Yeah, he saw it and he said he liked it. You know, I hope he actually did because I didn't mean to hurt his feelings or anything. He is a human being and I do like the guy.

I remember when you guys first signed to Fat, you were labeled as sellouts for jumping off of No Idea, yet you stayed on another independent label. Seeing as how you had all the major-label money flashing in front of you, yet you stayed put on an independent label – you would think that that label would have worn itself out by now. Yet when I stopped by your website recently, the message board is still full of rumblings and grumblings about sponsorships, shows being hosted by Starbucks, and a bunch of other petty crap, all of which have the 'sellout' tag attached to it. How you guys feel about that kind of shit being thrown around?
You know, it's funny with the message board, because that is something that we actually were talking about the last couple of days. I think we're just going to finally take the message board down for good, because it is just such a major...bummer. People's attitudes are just so negative and not cool and not anything that I want to be a part of. And it's unfortunate, because at this point, with people on the message board, you just can't win. They don't want any type of actual justification or anything, they don't want any kind of explanation. They just have however many threads on there criticizing us for certain things, and it's not like if we came out actually really posted a reply or something like that, or tried to offer our thoughts on it that they'd be taken seriously or that it would ever STOP the talk. It would keep going and people would find a problem with what they said in response, and they're going to have a problem no matter what. And it's just never-ending, so you sort of come to a calm acceptance of it where you realize that you're just never going to make some people happy, and that

PHOTO BY JOHN JOH



people are going to find a problem no matter what you do. And as long as you feel sound, and you feel justified, then that's all that you really can go on, you know? It's definitely true that by going through things like this, it has made me a lot less judgmental and think that maybe I shouldn't judge people unless I'm in their shoes and know exactly what's going on. Because people don't... this is probably going to sound dumb or something, but you don't know what it's like to be in a band unless you're in a band. There are just certain realities and stuff that you couldn't understand unless you were in a touring band, and that's just the way it is.

One statement I read a lot of, and I'm paraphrasing here, was 'as long as their sound doesn't change, and their next CD doesn't suck, they're not sellouts.' Well your sound hasn't changed, and the CD doesn't suck, yet I doubt that the talk will end. It's just sad that in the punk rock scene, if you can support yourself off your music – if you can afford to support yourself with a band, if you can afford to live and eat, then you aren't legit. Why do you think that this type of thinking has continued within the punk rock scene?
I have no idea. Are you familiar with the author Chuck Palahniuk at all? He wrote Fight Club, a bunch of other books, and he had a book come out recently called Haunted, which I highly recommend to people. It's a great book; he's one of my favorite authors. There's a story in it, it's sort of a joke or a letter from a cook being written to a cooking knife company. He's thanking the knife company for making such a quality knife and the letter goes on to explain that they're such good knifes because they help him cook so well and they kill critics so well, and how he can't stand food critics, with their snobby attitudes and how they can come in and they can just be high-and-might, holier-than-though and if you're having a bad day or you have one mistake with your meal, they can taste that and ruin your business and leave such lasting harm. And he talks about that, which I really agree with. In the passage, he states how that to him is selling out. Selling out is when you stop making music, or stop appreciating music, it's just when you start to criticize. That's what a food critic is to him, when they're not being a cook or whatever, or even trying. It's like 'what the fuck have you done? Where is your band?' And I kind of agree with that.

So I read a story recently about a mishap in a hotel

elevator that happened to you guys a few months back. While it might be old news, I'm betting a lot of people haven't heard about it, and it was just so goddamned funny that I'm gonna ask you to once again tell it, from start to finish, so everyone else can enjoy the same laugh I did.

(laughing before the story is even started) Yeah, haha. We were in Austin and it was after SXSW. We were staying at, I think it was a Marriot, right down the street from Emo's. And we were hanging out with the SMOKE OR FIRE guys that night. And we all went back to the hotel after the show, and nobody was really ready to go to bed but all the bars were closed. We had heard there was a party on the fourteenth flour, so we all piled into the elevator. That's both of our bands, and we went up to the fourteenth floor. Immediately when we got off the elevator on the fourteenth floor, we saw that there were a bunch of cops, obviously breaking up the party. So we just turned right around and got back on to the elevator and start to go down. So as we're going down someone – I think it was James – pressed all the floor buttons. So we started to stop at every single floor. So every time it would stop, we'd start to kind of yell and dance and grab whoever was waiting there and pulled them onto the elevator and make them join the elevator party. So there were just random people in there. We even grabbed a pizza delivery guy at one point, who was in there with his hot pizza. We had, I think it was 22 people crammed into this little elevator, and we were going down to the third floor which was the final stop, and when we were supposed to stop, the elevator just kept falling and falling, all the way to the basement level and landed with kind of a thud. It even went beyond the basement level, so that the floor level was up to your chest. So we were just like 'holy fuck, what the fuck just happened?' And the door was opening and everything like that, so we realized that we were stuck. So we started to ring the bell and we were trying to get the doors open, and someone picked up the phone and tried to call the front desk, but the front desk didn't give a fuck. They were just like 'you deserve it, cramming that many people into an elevator.' But we ended up being rescued by the fire department after an hour of being stuck in the elevator, and it was seriously one of the worst experiences of my whole entire life. I realized how claustrophobic I was, and



PHOTO BY BRYAN WYNACHT

it just sucked. The air was disappearing, and everyone but me was really drunk, and there was this girl who was on the floor who every so often would wake up from her drunken stupor and realize she was stuck in an elevator and be like 'GET US THE FUCK OUTTA HERE' and start to scream and talk about how she was about to throw up, and it was a horrible experience.

But it's funny now?

Oh yeah, looking back, it's pretty funny. But at the time, everyone was on such a buzz, the show was great, and we were all like 'yeah, let's go to a party on the fourteenth floor, it'll be great,' and everyone is piling in to the elevator, and everyone is happy, but seriously once the fire department got us out, everyone was kind of just looking down at their feet kind of solemnly, and everyone was realizing the point of desperation that we had all got to by being trapped in an elevator, and everyone knew this ugly truth about each other. So after that, everyone just kind of turned around, tail between their legs, and went back to their hotel rooms and didn't say anything.

You guys are gonna be playing a show at Giants Stadium in New Jersey with JIMMY EAT WORLD and GREEN DAY. Is it safe to say that this is the biggest stage you guys have played to? How did you guys get hooked up with this show?

We got asked to do it, GREEN DAY asked us to do it. We're also playing that same show 2 days later in Boston, in Foxboro. So yeah, they asked us to do it, and I could be wrong about this, but someone told me that this is the biggest crowd that GREEN DAY has ever played, too. Yeah, 58,000 people is a lot of fucking people.

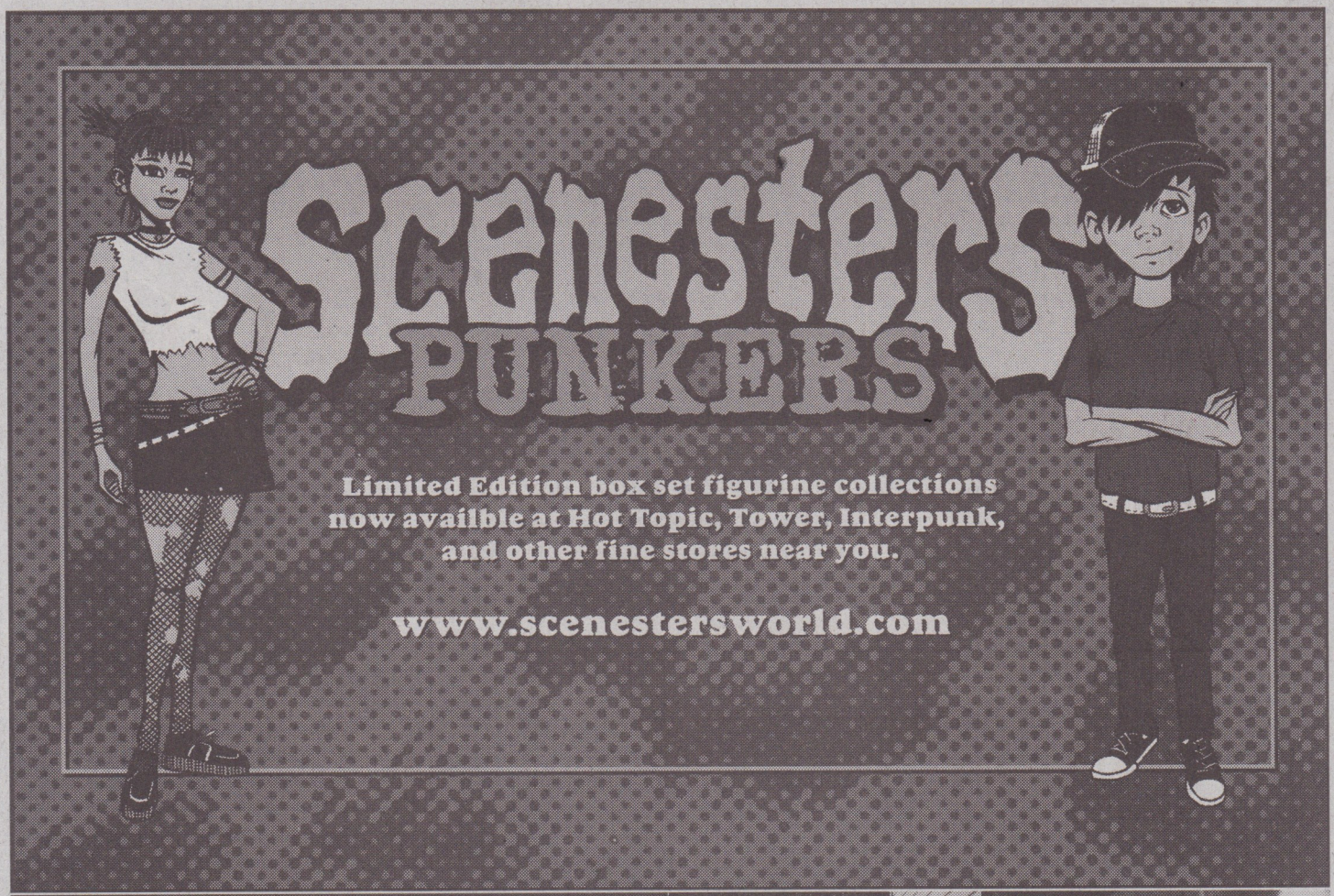
You guys are gonna be playing a slightly smaller show at CBGBs in August, and are one of the many bands that have been confirmed for the upcoming month's push to keep CBGBs open. Other bands that are going to play include THE DEAD BOYS, CIRCLE JERKS, GORILLA BISCUITS, and THURSDAY. How important is it for you guys to play at a place like CBGBs, given its current state, and to be a part of the push to save it?

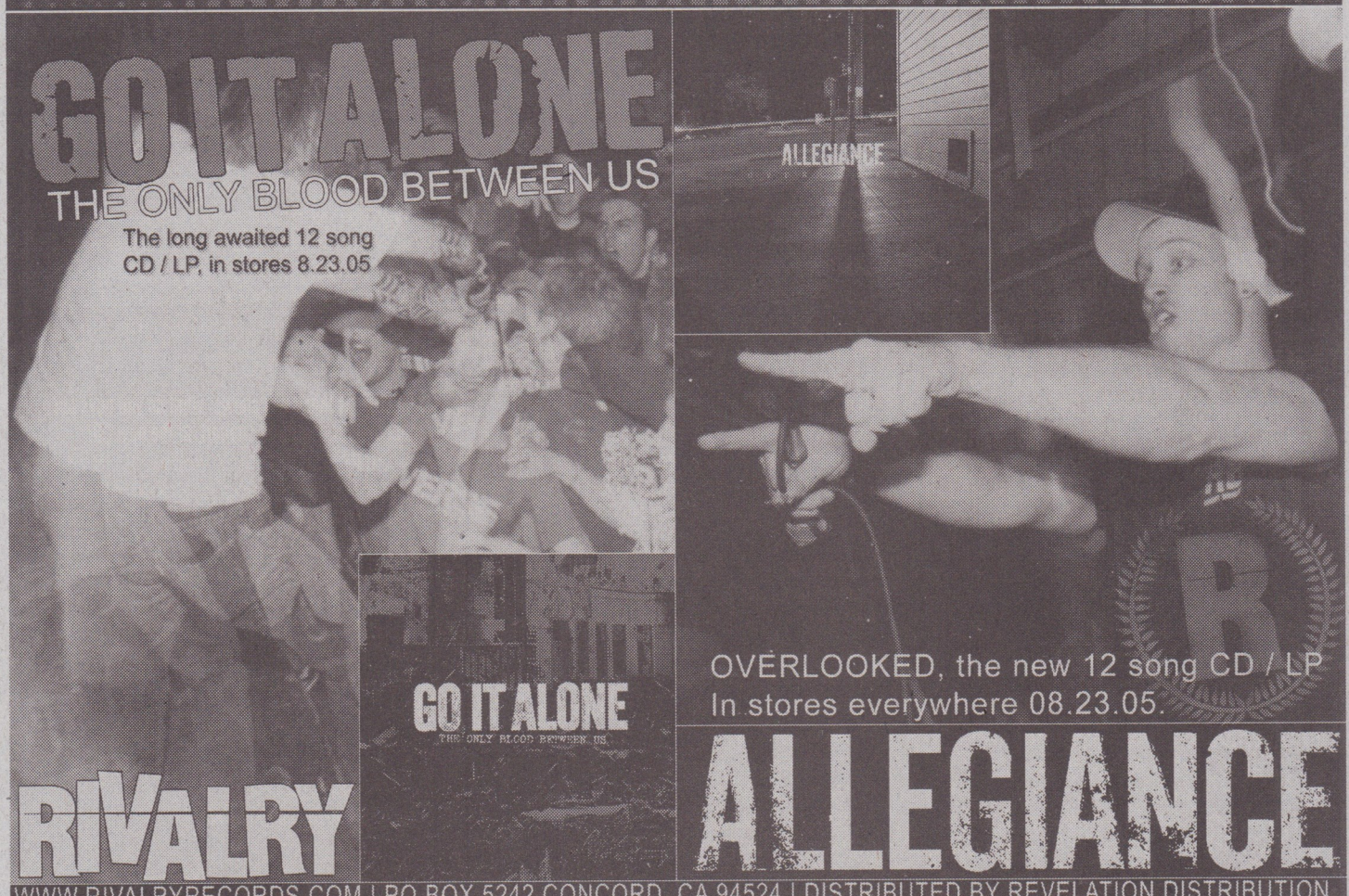
You know, I feel like I want to be a part of it for both reasons. To lend a hand into possibly saving it because it is a landmark venue or whatever, and also I just think it will be cool to say I have played there, you know? I've driven by it, but we've never even gone inside, so I'm excited. Whenever I tell anyone we're playing there, they're just like "eh, CBGBs sucks." But I don't care, I just want to play there, and we'll be happy to play.

So outside of these few shows, what do you guys have planned in terms of tour support for the new CD?

Well, the GREEN DAY shows kind of kick it off at the beginning of September, and then after that like I said, we'll be coming home to Florida and playing a bunch of Florida shows around the state. Then after that, we head back up to New York to play CMJs, and then we are actually going on a fifty-state tour with THE EPOXIES, THE SOVIETTES, and SMOKE OR FIRE, so that will keep us out until December. So that's a long time.

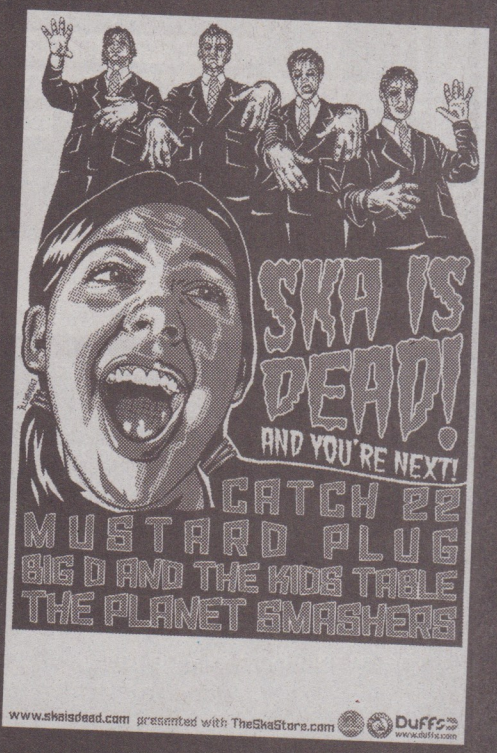
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SKA IS DEAD





By Patrick Fulton / Photography By Kevin Nunn

Ska. The mere mention of the word on scene message boards is normally followed with any number of replies ranging from favorable to downright rude – pun fully intended. Often, people will mention that they were once very much into a particular band or the genre itself, but haven't given either much thought for at least a few years. Is ska even around anymore? If Dave Kirchgessner could reply to those people, he'd probably tell them that yes, ska is still very much a genre and still important.

Fans of the genre might recognize Kirchgessner as the vocalist for Michigan-based third wave all stars Mustard Plug. What they may not know is that Kirchgessner is also the man behind the successful Ska Is Dead tour, which, in little over a year's time, has thrust attention back onto the ska scene.

"The first time out on the tour was an experiment," Kirchgessner says. "A lot of ska bands had previously been pressured to go out on tours with non-ska bands on the bill. Kids were waiting for a big tour like this."

The name of the tour pokes fun at the misconception that ska only exists in the memories of twenty-somethings who wore



suits, checker-board suspenders and danced funny in the post-grunge 90's. That misconception is largely based on the genre's quick retreat to the underground after the media focused its attention on the next big thing. Plenty of bands broke up, moved on or even changed their sound.

"The media built ska up to be something that it's not," says Kirchgessner. "The underground was really strong, but all of the hype made things unsustainable. Record stores started buying a bunch of records and the market got flooded. The whole scene just went back so far underground – mostly because it was burned by the bands that didn't put in their time and work their way up."

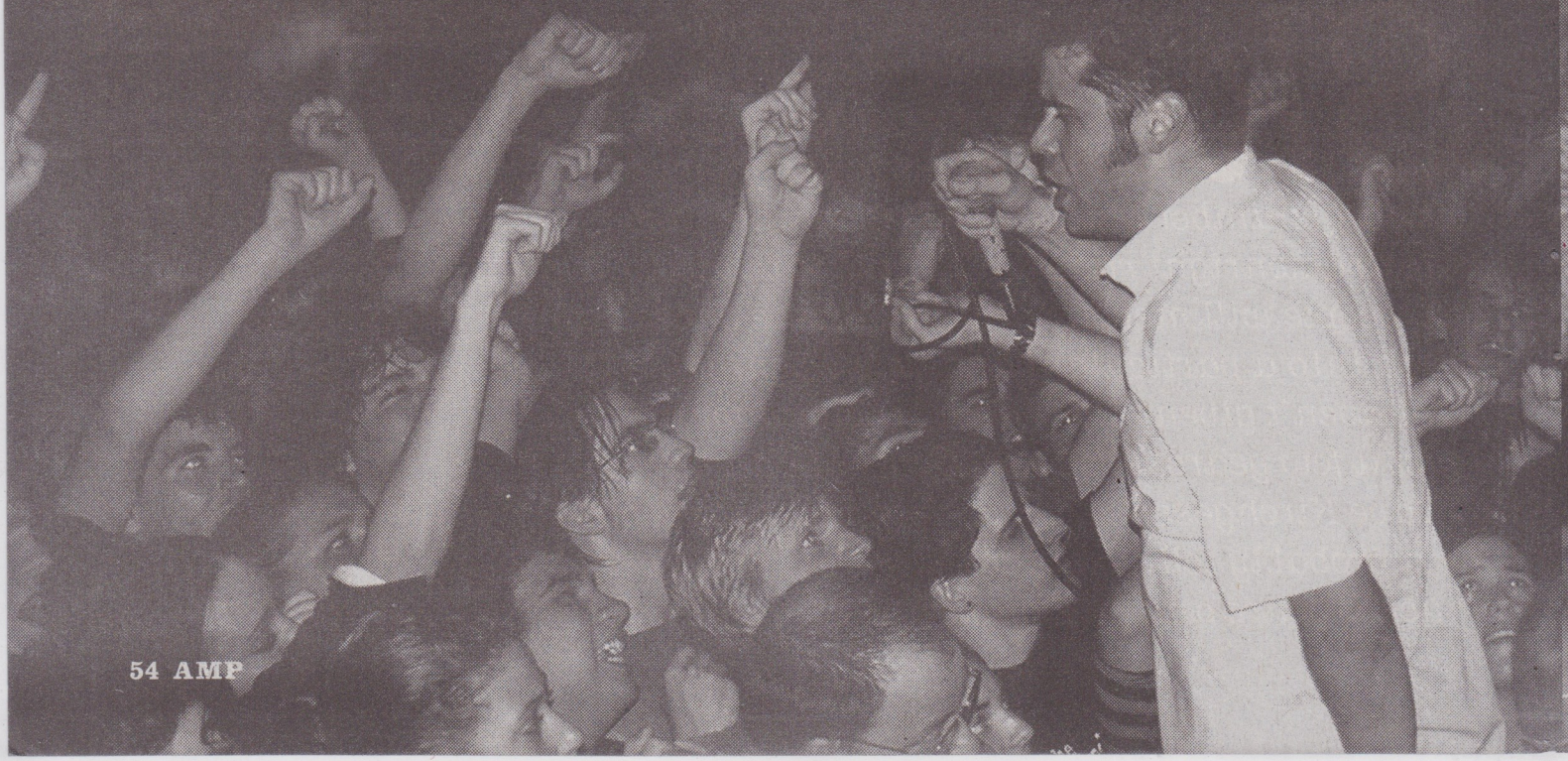
An examination of bands who released albums during 1997 alone reveals so much about the late 90's boom. Link 80, The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Bim Skala Bim, Buck O Nine, The Bruce Lee Band, Five Iron Frenzy, MU330, The OC Supertones, Skinnerbox, Save Ferris, Skankin' Pickle, The Mad Caddies, and even Kircgessner's band Mustard Plug are just some of the A-List bands who released albums and toured to thousands of kids all over the U.S. In the same regard, this article could easily take up several pages with the names of bands who released albums in that same year who never got off the ground or just threw the word "ska" into their name to cash in on the genre.

The media and the genre had essentially burned themselves out on the hype and even some of the big name bands who had been around for years suffered as a result. The last "large" bit of press coverage the ska scene got was when the NYC Moon Ska office closed its doors due to bankruptcy in 2000. That is, until now.

According to Kirchgessner and the Ska Is Dead website (www.skaisdead.com), the idea for the tour came about quite a while ago. He credits 1998's Ska Against Racism tour to be the pinnacle of the third wave movement and also the point where he noticed the start of the genre's rapid decline.

In 2002, while on the Warped tour, Mustard Plug often played early in the day only to be discovered later at their merch booth by fans who weren't aware that the band was even on the tour. Warped Tour gave Kirchgessner the opportunity to speak with Mike Park, The Planet Smashers and Big D and the Kids Table about the state of ska and what it would take to bring forth a revival or at least generate some new interest in the scene.

In 2003, Las Vegas' Xtreme Thing venue played host to the Ska Summit, which consisted of 23 ska bands and attracted nearly 11,000 fans. At that point, Kirchgessner knew that ska was not dead. He put the wheels in motion and









by February 2004, Mustard Plug, Catch 22, Big D and the Kids Table, and The Planet Smashers, along with a few other bands, were hitting the road together.

Kirchgessner was pleasantly surprised to see that not only was the tour able to attract the older audiences who had been into the scene before, but a younger crowd had started to appear, too.

"There have been a lot of young, new kids in the crowd every night on the first two tours," Kirchgessner says excitedly. "It seems like the older fans are still there, but there's a new batch of kids who are picking up on the music. Kids who are 14, 15, 16-years-old. It was surprising to me at first, but it's definitely great."

Ska Is Dead 3, which kicks off in September, features more of a "traditional" lineup with bands like The Toasters, The Planet Smashers, Mustard Plug and The Know How, among others.

"The first two tours sort of focused on a punk or punk-ska type of sound," Kirchgessner says. "We're trying to get more and more diversity on the bill each time we head out."

Not ruling out the possibility of Ska Is Dead spurning a fourth wave, Kirchgessner is first and foremost focused on reinvigorating the already established underground scene.

"It's still my hope that "Ska Is Dead" will be a catalyst for reviving Ska scenes wherever it goes and beyond," he notes on the website. "Hopefully this can be an ongoing event with an ever-changing roster of bands that reflect all the different branches and roots of the genre."

All the info you need about the Ska Is Dead Tour can be found at www.skaisdead.com.



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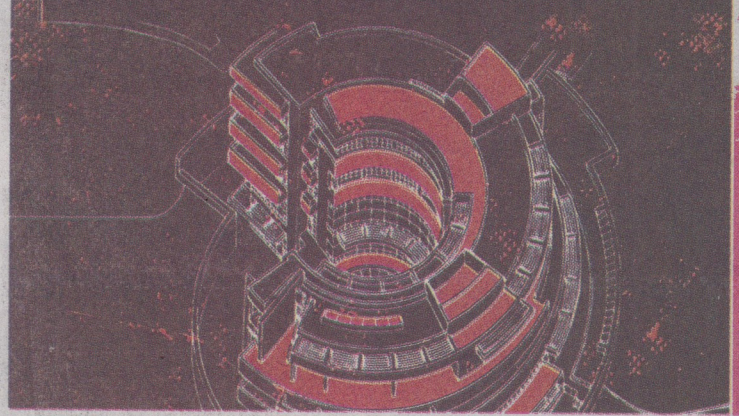
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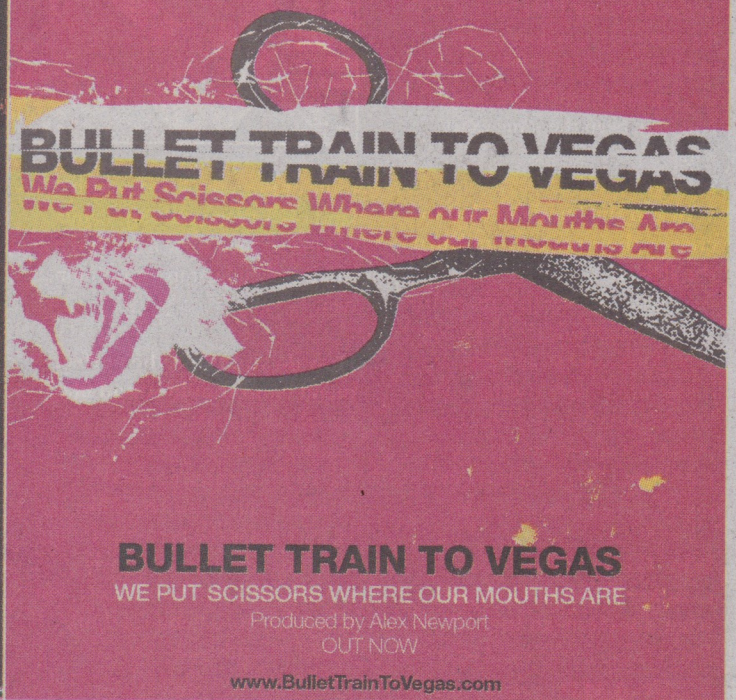
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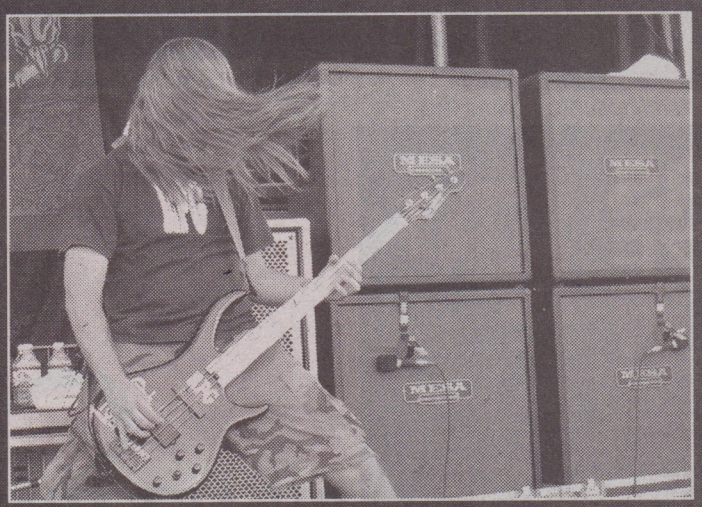
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Lamb Of God



Interview By Kent Bamberger / Photography By Warren Hart



What is your name, and what do you do in Lamb of God?
My name is John Campbell, and I am the bassist for Lamb of God.

How and when was Lamb of God formed?
We began as Burn the Priest back in the winter of 1994, and in 2000 we changed the name to Lamb of God. Since 1998/99 we have essentially had the same members and have been the same exact band.

Why did the band decided to change their name from Burn the Priest?
As a whole, we felt that the name was a little bit silly for as serious as we took as what we were doing, which was creating really heavy music. We were also being pigeonholed into being a satanic metal band. We are a band making music, not a religious band.

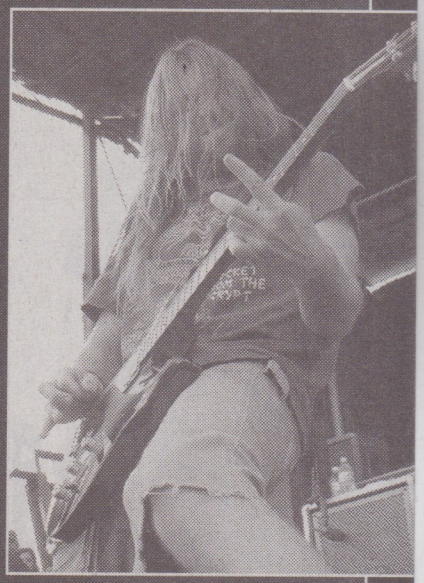
Why did you choose the moniker Lamb of God, and what does it mean to you?
It seemed to go the exact opposite route of Burn the Priest, which was kind of cartoony and silly. Lamb of God seemed to be a much more subtly evil, at least in my opinion, name.

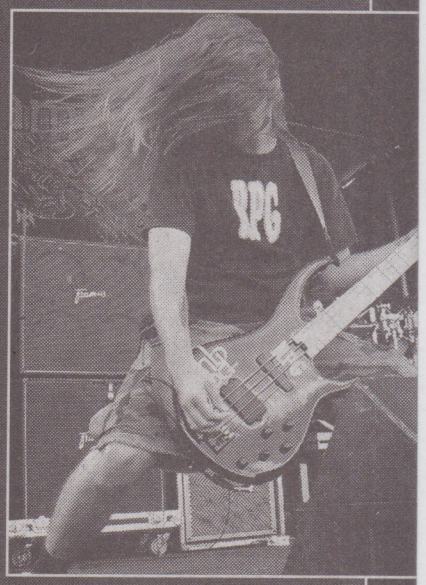
How do you think the perfect metal band should sound like?
Exactly like Lamb of God (laughter). That's a weird question, I don't know. That's a good goddamn question. That's like saying what is the perfect painting look like. There are definitely aspects that put it into a genre, but to say that art is perfect, I think would be a mistake.

Where does the lyrical creativity come from? What inspires LOG to get out and tell the world how they feel?
Our latest record *Ashes of the Wake*, when we went to start doing that one, there was a conscious effort to make sure it wasn't a political record. It was written in the beginning of January 2004, when the Presidential elections started heating up. It was kind of hard to ignore what was going on, and that came out in the lyrics that we were putting together. Mark, our guitar player, and Randy are the primary lyric writers. Mark



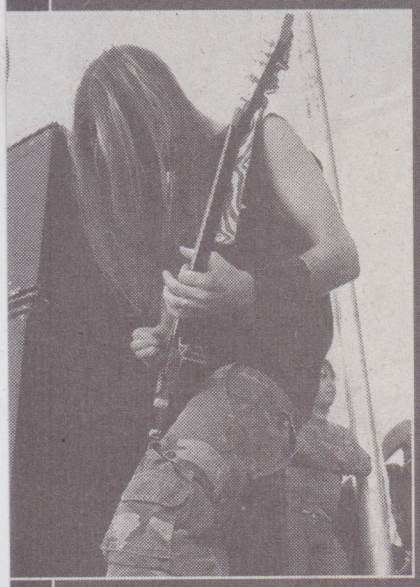


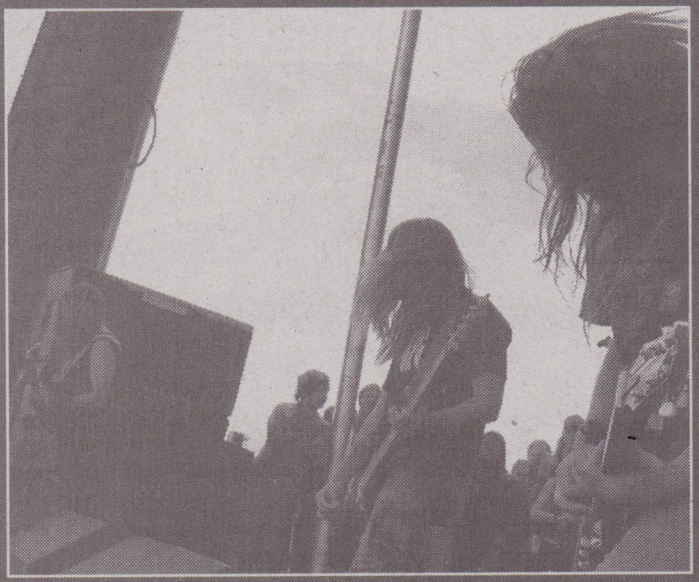




listens to a lot of hip hop, and takes a lot of vocal arrangement ideas from hip hop, which helps him write and produce the lyrics on the album.

Do the members of the band exclusively listen to metal? I guess you just answered that. Well that's one member. There are different degrees of metal fans in the band. Our drummer is a diehard metal fan. He listens to metal around the clock. The rest of us have a heavy appreciation for metal and listen to our fair share. When you go out and are touring with a bunch of metal bands and it's metal metal metal, personally I like to listen to a bunch of different stuff. I put headphones on when I go to sleep so I can listen to music, and I almost always listen to this







band from here in Richmond called Denali. It's real kind of laid back, doesn't have a DJ.

How did Lamb of God react to the Damage Plan incident that happened last year?
We had the extremely good fortune of meeting Dimebag and the dudes in Damage Plan about a month before all the craziness went down. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have met Dimebag. He was exactly how people were writing about him. He was an incredibly nice guy, friendly, and didn't have a rock star attitude around him outside of having an ego... you definitely knew that he was in the room, but he was in the room, handing everyone a shot saying "Let's party!" The incident itself... we were in England when it went down, I think it happened the first or second week in December. The shock was intense. I think we were in Brighton at the time, and I remember walking around just stunned that something like that could happen. You don't really think about random acts of violence like that affecting you on that level. It was definitely a tragedy; I don't think an avoidable one. It was a horrible thing to have happen and it makes you think a little bit more about what's going on.

Does it make any of you think differently when you are playing shows now?
No, it doesn't. I remember on the Slipknot tour, we were playing in Dallas. Some kid came up on stage and made a b-line for Randy, and I just remember watching that and being really freaked out and saying to myself "What in the fuck is going on? What is this kid going to do?" Of course the kid ran up and gave Randy a hug and dove off the stage. I don't think it's changed anything on how we do things; it's changed the perspective on things. For example, if you see a really bad car wreck, that might make you slow down a little bit, but you aren't going to stop driving.

Besides the DVD, do you have any plans set up to release a new album or go into the studio and record a new album?
We are trying to figure out the schedule on that now. Epic has picked up the option for another record, so there will be another record out on Epic. It will definitely be released next year, probably middle of next year. We haven't nailed anything down; we are kind of exploring our options for when and where.

Has there been any new songs written since you have released your last record?
At this point, we don't. We leave to do the Sounds of the Underground Tour, and after that me and Randy are getting married, although not to each other. As soon as that kind of goes down, we will probably begin the writing process, as well as gear up for any tours that we may have, say October-ish.

Do you enjoy touring the United States better then other parts of the world, or is it the other way around?
We just got back from our first trip to mainland Europe, and it was an amazing experience. I cannot wait to get back over there and do it again. The Slipknot tour we did was definitely a success; there were all kinds of kids there when we were on stage, getting into what we were doing. That part of that tour was amazing. Playing arenas, they don't usually put arenas by cool stuff, so that ended up being a really boring tour. It kind of depends on where you're playing, and the size of the venue as far as what there is to do and see around the venue.

So when you play smaller clubs you get to see a lot of sights around the cities?
Oh, absolutely. The smaller clubs are in the cities, as apposed to the outskirts of the cities where the arenas are.

I saw that you recently re-released the self- titled album Burn the Priest earlier this year. Do you have any plans to re-release any of your older songs through Epic from the Burn the Priest era?
Well, that was our first full- length release as a band. Prior to that we had been on two splits, and before that we had a four song demo that we had recorded for booking shows and stuff like that. There's really not a whole, whole lot of material that hasn't been released. After the Burn the Priest record came out, we were picked up by Prosthetic, which was when we changed our name to Lamb of God and put out New American Gospel, which is still available in stores through Prosthetic. For the most part, everything that we have done, at this point, is pretty much available. There is really nothing to go back and re-release.

How was your experience touring on Ozzfest last summer?
Oh, Ozzfest was a drunken blur; it was a lot of fun. Huge crowds and most of the bands that we were touring with on the second stage we had known through years of touring. The bands that we didn't know were super cool. It was like a heavy metal summer camp, which we said to a bunch of people. You would go out and play a show, then do all the press and signings and that would end at about 3 or 4 and the buses wouldn't leave until midnight to 2 AM, so it was a raging party. I'm hoping that this Sounds tour that were going on, I'm pretty sure it will, more or less be a repeat of that.

That's about it! Do you have anything else to say?
Not particularly, I'd just like to thank you for helping spread the word. To everyone who reads this, thanks for taking the time and I hope to see you at a show.


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No Use For A Name

By Emily Zemler

The music scene is always being barraged with new bands rocking tattoos and three-part harmonies so it can be easy to forget the bands that have been sporting the look and playing the chords since before these kids were born. San Jose, CA's No Use For A Name has never stopped playing since their inception almost two decades ago, evolving from being a band that needs influences to being a band that provides them. Singer and guitarist Tony Sly discusses NUFAN's role in the current music scene as he preps for the release of the group's fifth full-length album on Fat Wreck Chords, Keep Them Confused.



Are your influences today the same as when you got started?
I still listen to a lot of that same stuff, but it's a nostalgia thing instead of 'Here's what I'm going to listen to on my headphones.' It's not the same as it used to be because I think along with that a long time ago it was also a rebellion. Going to shows had a whole different meaning. Seeing the bands was much more important to me as a kid and being older I kinda hope kids feel the same way about my band as I did about those bands back then. But my influences are always changing; I'm always buying new CDs and listening to new bands.

What are you listening to now?
Right now I've been listening to the new Jimmy Eat World record a lot. And I've been listening to our new record a lot because we just finished mastering it and, not to toot my own horn or anything, but it's kinda nice because all the songs are so new. It's refreshing to hear some new stuff from your own band, you know?

Tell me about the new record.
I think if you're gonna compare it to one of our other albums, it's more like More Betterness than anything. But anytime I say anything about it people disagree with me. I'm really proud of it. It was well-written I think and the lyrics are uninhibited and everybody played really well on it. Everybody practiced really hard. It came sounding really nice. It's got a little bit of a dark side to it; it's got some heavier sounding songs.

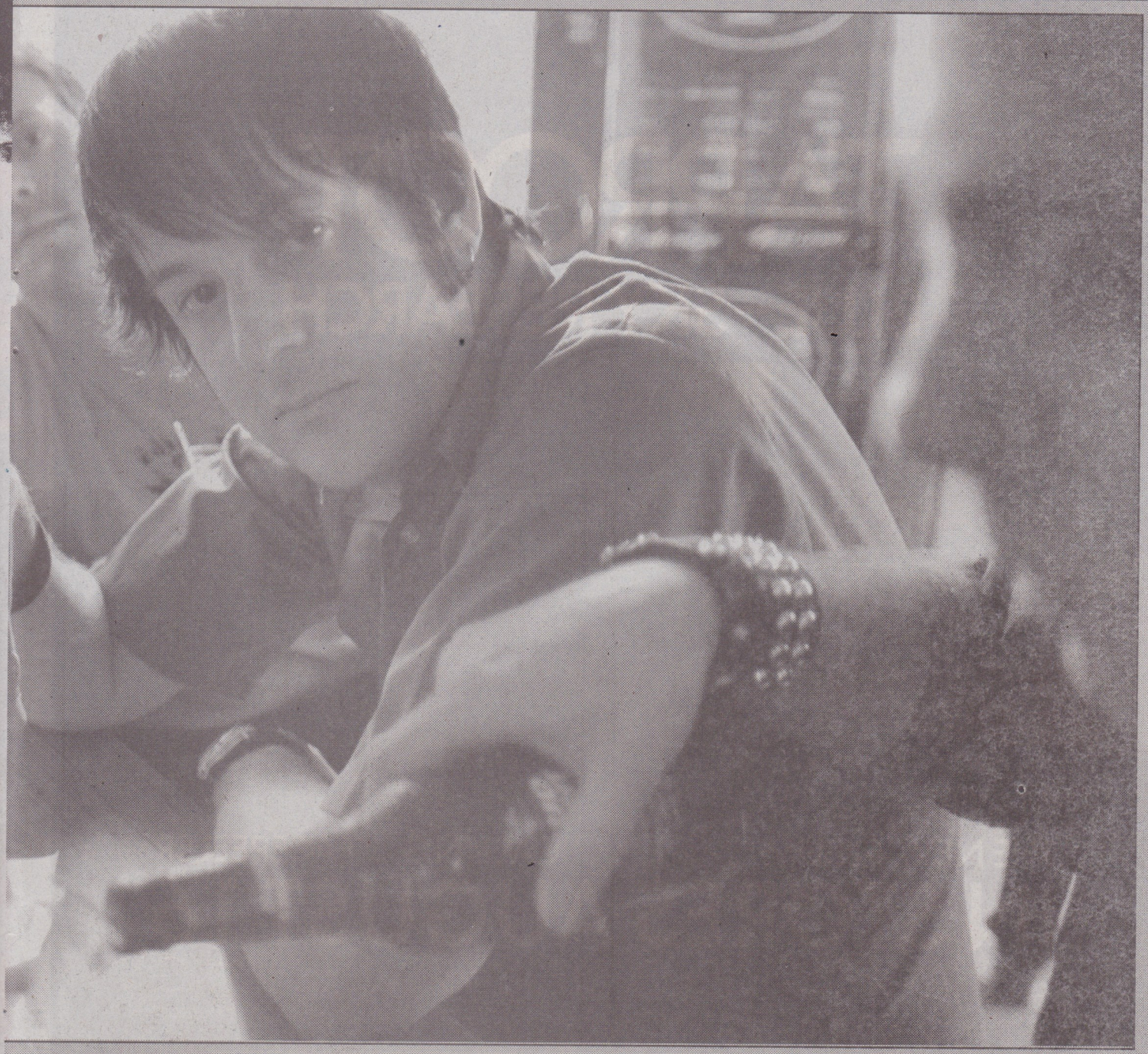
How do you feel like NUFAN has evolved over the years?
I think it's been pretty natural for us because nothing has really happened for us overnight. We've been a band for a long time and sort of just taken little steps to getting where we are. I think that every time that it's evolved, it's been very honest and not forced. I'd like to think that somewhere along the line we sort of found our own sound. A long time ago we used to be compared to Bad Religion and that we were ripping off them and NOFX. And it was probably true because we were young and those were the bands we listened to. I think for the last four or five records, we've evolved into our own thing instead of following someone else's thing.

So now instead of you ripping people off, kids are ripping you off.
I hear that all the time: "Oh this band sounds just like you." And they play it and I'm like, "Well I don't really hear it." I guess it's because if you've kind of lost it you don't really look for it. It's flattering, more than anything, because if you influence somebody enough to where [their music] happens to sound like one of your songs, that's cool with me. I don't mind that at all.

Do you consider yourselves to be a punk band?
Not really. I mean you don't like to think of yourself as that, but our roots are punk rock and that's kind of where we all grew up. So, in a sense, we are a punk band, but it's not the same as it used to be. Punk rock has changed so much. I think punk rock's alive, but it's not alive in the scene that's going on right now. It's not alive on all these major tours and with these major label bands; that's not punk rock to me.

Is that disappointing to you?
Yes and no. We play big shows too and sell a good amount of records, and if that means we're not punk rock then I guess we're not. We're on the Warped Tour so we don't have anything against doing corporate events.

You'll be on Warped Tour this



summer?
Yeah. We're on the main stage.

How many times have you done Warped Tour?
This will be our fourth.

It is strange to now be one of the oldest bands on the tour?
I guess. I didn't really think about that too much. There's a lot of new young bands, just like we were, and it seems like it was that way last time, too. Then you've got bands like The Offspring that are much older than we are.

Do you ever get tired of being on tour?
Oh yeah! I always say that when you're at home all you want to do is go on tour and when you're on tour all you want to do is go home, but that's just because you're missing something about it, you know? If you're on a tour for three months straight, going into that third month is hard. We all chose each other to be in the band together, but we didn't all choose to live together. Everybody knows each other a little too well and knows what pushes each others' buttons so you can get into some pretty childish stuff when you're on tour.

Do you know anything about your band mates that you wish you didn't know?
Umm, no, not really.

What's something you think people should know about NUFAN that they probably don't know?
That's a good question. Maybe that we're totally approachable people, that we don't really carry an attitude. We're just like anybody else really. We just kind of think of it as job so we don't carry around a ton of ego just because we're the ones on stage. We're more down to earth than that. I don't know if people know that or not.

Well, they do now.

TAPROOT

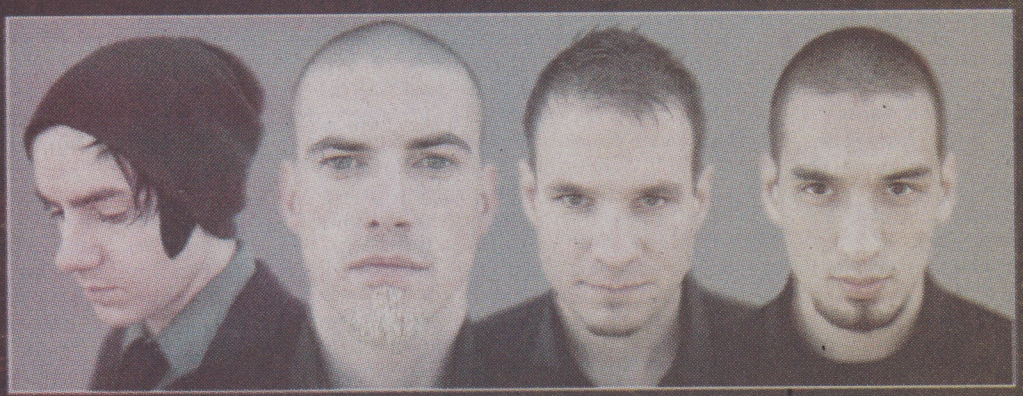
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Frank Black

Building a Legacy...

By Brian Peterson

The word "legend" often gets bandied around rather loosely when it comes to the legacy of musicians. In a lot of cases, all it takes is either a premature death or a notorious act to garner loads of media attention and fan obsessiveness.

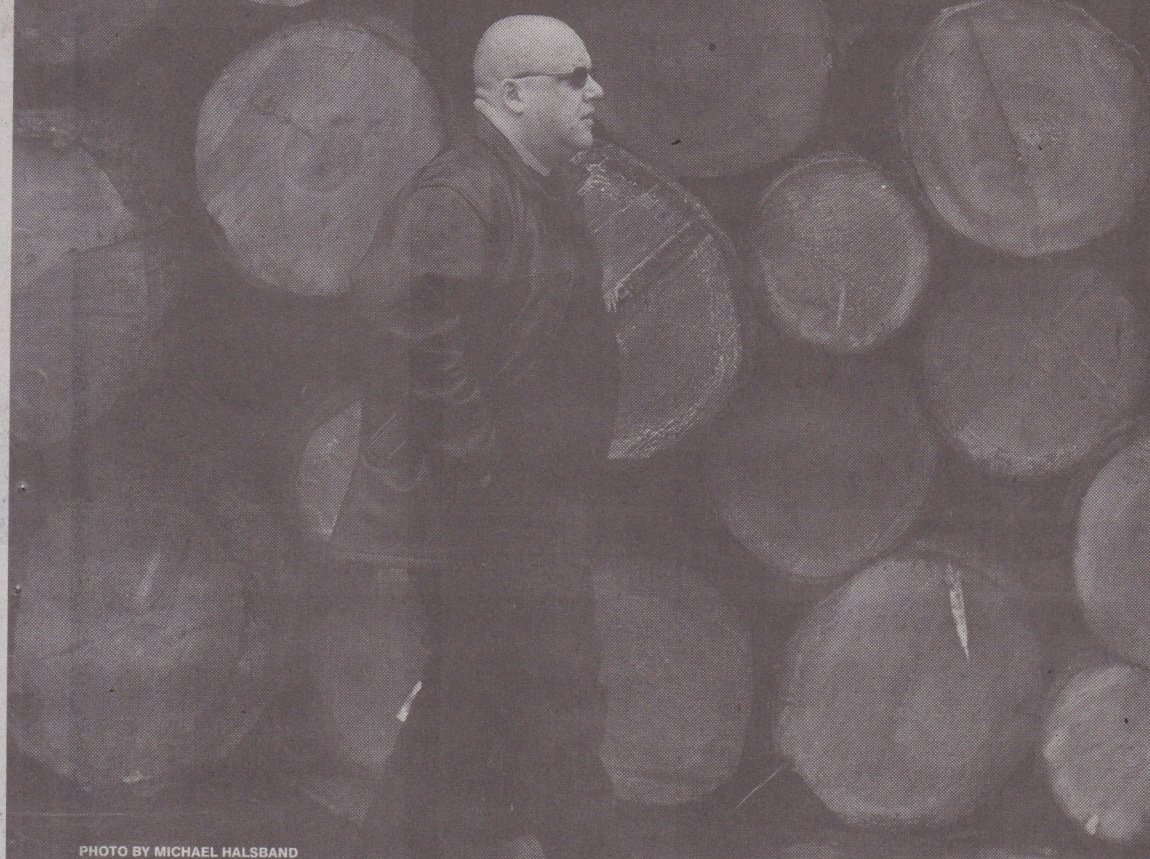


PHOTO BY MICHAEL HALSBAND

Others, however, have built a reputation based on hard work and a record-by-record built career as an artist. For example, anyone who has followed music for the past two decades would surely have to agree that Frank Black easily fits the "legend" definition and he has done it all on his own terms.

Black's influence cannot possibly be measured in quantifiable terms as the music he has been associated with, in particular that of The Pixies, has seemingly become an inspirational soundtrack not only for an entire generation of music fans, but for countless musicians to boot.

Black's lofty status aside, there were some musicians who originally inspired him to pick up his guitar in his youth. Little did he know he would someday be able to cut a record with some of these fire-starters.

Honeycomb - Black's first solo album since 1996 - definitely reaffirms his chops as a first-rate songwriter. But one of the most striking things about this gentle, inviting album is the line-up Black had at his fingertips to fill in the rest of the gaps to his tender songs. Backed by prominent rock and soul players (Steve Cropper, Spencer Oldham and David Hood, among others) who have performed with the likes of Booker T. and the MG's, Otis Redding and Elvis Presley, Honeycomb is one of the most thrilling creative rides of Black's musical career, which in turn adds to the atmosphere of the feel-good country-tinged rock sweated up during his time in Nashville.

Excited about his new album, as well as more festival dates with The Pixies, Black took some time to talk with AMP about Honeycomb and his creative process in general. While there have been some bumps in the road at times for Black during his career, the grace of his new album confidently demonstrates that this "legend" is just now entering his prime.

It's been a while since your last "solo" record. What took so long to do another one?
I think that's mostly technical jargon. There is more than one way to skin a cat, I suppose. Sometimes you do it with a band that has some sort of implication as having certain musicians associated with you and sometimes you write with other people that are not necessarily associated with you. Other times you make a record by yourself. From my point of view it's all just one big, giant album.

What kind of atmosphere do you tend to prefer when making a record? Do you like playing with a set band more than, say, recording with session players?
Again, there is no rule so there is no expectation on my part for one to be better than the other. You don't know what the results are going to be. You might do something great and you might do something mediocre. You just don't know until you hear it back. So, I have absolutely no preference whatsoever. I have failed in every situation and succeeded in every situation.

How did the making of Honeycomb come about?
The producer and I had been talking about making a Nashville record for about eleven years. I finally gave him the green-light. I didn't really do anything other than say, "Okay, I'm finally ready. I'll write the songs and you organize the sessions." And I wrote the songs over a couple of months and he booked those guys and I just walked a studio and we cut it.

What was the inspiration to do a record in Nashville?
I suppose the model would have been Bob Dylan's Blonde on Blonde record where he went to Nashville and did a session with some cats. That's what I wanted to do and that was the main inspiration.

You were able to play with some incredibly gifted musicians during these sessions. What was it like playing with these legendary figures?
We didn't really need to practice. Actually, they didn't even need to hear the songs. [Laughs] They just needed to know what key we were going to be in. We just turned the red light on and they played the songs and heard them for the first time at the same time. They were very good. [Laughs] It was wonderful to have that amazingly solid foundation of experience for these songs.

Did you get chills playing with these guys?
Yeah, it was very poignant and very moving. These guys have probably been to hell and back and they have probably played with everybody and here they are playing on my songs and they are making it sound like a record without even having to spend much time with the music.

Was there anything you learned as a musician by playing with these guys?
I don't know that I learned anything in that it all happened so quickly, I just experienced something. I did observe that they were able to listen very closely. They are very trained to listen to the song, the singer, the other players and they are very tuned in to what is going on. They are not so self-obsessed with what they are playing.

Was there any particular reason for titling the new record Honeycomb?
[Speaking in a Southern drawl] Oh, because it sounded like a nice cozy old Nashville title. [Laughs] Really, it just sounded good; it was one word that jumped out from all of the song titles. That's the first place you look when you're looking for a title to your record—you look at the song titles and if any of those work. If none of them do work you move on from there. But I thought Honeycomb was a nice enough sounding word.

What are you happiest with about Honeycomb?
I certainly have the feeling that people like it. I've done a few interviews and read a few reviews and I get the impression that people seem to like it. I'm obviously very pleased about that. You do your art for yourself in part but you also do it for somebody out there, so it feels good to be validated by people out there.

It's been said that you had gone through kind of a rough period in your life at the time right before the recording sessions for this record. Did the writing and recording of these songs help you work through these problems at all?
Well, recording music or going on tour and performing are always a highlight in my life. Did it help me get through some tough times? Yes, it did but only in the way that it always does. But, overall, I would say that it did feel really good to make a record at that time.



"I'd like to do some work that is more related to 1950s or doo-wop music...I'd love to play that kind of sound."

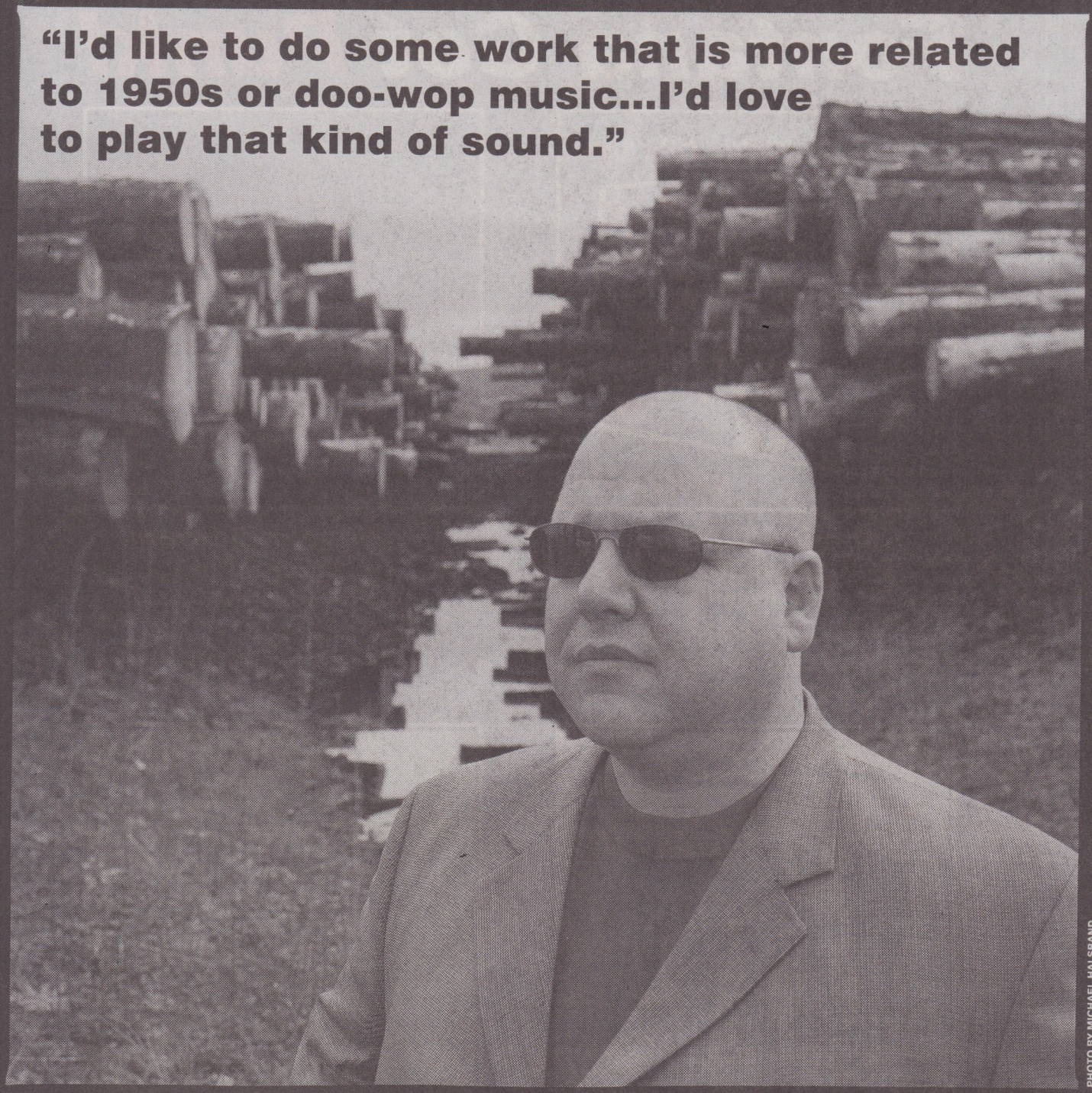


PHOTO BY MICHAEL HALSBAND

artists look at writing and performing music as somewhat of a cathartic experience in which they delve into their songs to help themselves work through a tough time in their life. Is music like that for you?
In moments, I suppose. I can't say that I can make a blanket statement about the process. I couldn't say, "Yeah, it's all cathartic." I think it's a lot more complicated than that. It has it's moments of catharsis but sometimes it's like building sandcastles on the beach. And that's all.

What would you say is the most frustrating thing for you about music?
I guess the most frustrating thing is doing work that isn't very good. When that happens it doesn't feel very good.

Looking back, what would you say would be one of your fondest moments in your music history up until this time?
I think toward the end of The Catholics. I was able to build my own studio and have it set up in about four different locations. I enjoyed taking the Do It Yourself message all of the way on that last Catholics record.

How would you say music has changed for you since you first started playing?
The actual process of writing music and recording it hasn't really changed much for me. Some of the technical aspects have changed, but the overall feel of it is the same—that hasn't changed since I was a teenager.

At this point in your career, is there anything else you would really like to accomplish?
I'd like to do some work that is more related to 1950s or doo-wop music. I heard this acapella gospel choir from Liberia, Africa the other night – we performed with them on the same stage – but they were best doo-wop music I've heard. They were so good. I'd love to play that kind of sound. ↖

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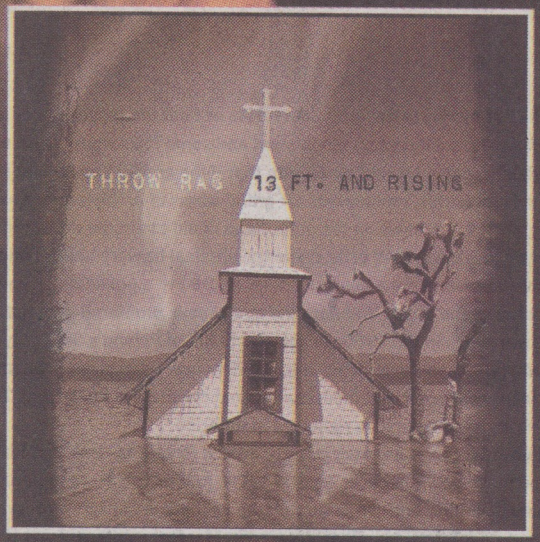
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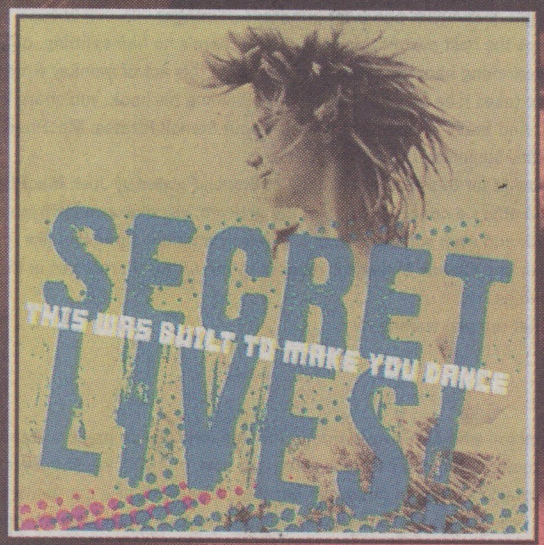
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ALAN BISBORT

July Entry:
GOING SOLO

Sometimes the most effective revolutions—the only ones available—are the solo kind. That is, when the ship is sinking, you don your own life jacket before helping those around you, and then you jump overboard and start swimming toward land.

In case you haven't noticed, the USS Ship of State is headed for the rocks. The captain is drunk, the crew is drugged, the passengers are brainwashed and the waters are churning up some righteous waves. We are, in fact, headed for one gigantic perfect wave of disasters: Iraq, Iran, Korea, global warming, national bankruptcy, over-consumption, under-education, fundamentalist ignorance replacing rational humanism and scientific inquiry. If the outlook is grim, our leaders are even grimmer.

Thus, the only glimmer of hope is what you, personally, are going to do about it. Being part of a group, an organization or a circle of kindred spirits (like the "punk rock community") is great, in general, or in more peaceful, less toxic times than these. When it gets down to cases, though, the solo act—more often than not anonymous—is the kind that brings the most satisfaction and makes the loudest statement.

Suffice it to say that I, like Edward Abbey's Hayduke character in The Monkey Wrench Gang, believe if you want a revolution you can't wait around for the next guy or gal to do it for you. You have to take matters into your own hands, so to speak. (But don't forget Hayduke's mantra: Don't. Get. Caught.

Two exceptionally good primers have just been published by Brooklyn's Soft Skull Press that show you who has done this and how they did it: Free Agents: A History of Washington D.C. Graffiti, compiled by Roger Gastman; and Stencil Pirates: A Global Study of Street Stencil by Josh MacPhee. The implied message of both books is that it's high time for you to get off the couch and into the streets.

Anyone steeped in Washington D.C.'s hardcore (aka harDCore) scene will be familiar with the visual treasures on view in Free Agents. These mural-sized blobs—created under the cover of darkness and under risk of arrest and/or grievous bodily harm—blossomed on walls, underpasses, bridges and buildings all over the Nation's Capital beginning during the Reagan presidency and Marion "Crackhead" Barry's mayorship, back when DC was the "murder capital of the world." HarDCore was straight-edged punk with a political component and it blossomed alongside GoGo, a black rap/funk hybrid peculiar to "Chocolate City" (as George Clinton called Washington). The 1980s were an exciting, though politically depressing, time to be in Washington D.C.

All of the 40 or so artists featured in Free Agents were anonymous then and remain so today (unlike Deep Throat!), their work only temporarily living under the "handles" "Seven," "Cool Disco Dan," "Dose," "Clear," "Chelove," and "Budda," among many others. The only evidence of their masterpieces is the snapshots that some astute photographers (also largely anonymous and unprofessional) took of their work. Many got busted by subway and city cops and spent time in jail. Others got the spirit of revolution out of their systems and moved on to relatively sedate lives, including Gastman, the "compiler" of this volume. Having lived in Washington D.C. during the time when much of this artwork appeared, I can attest to its subtle power to alter public consciousness. It not only served as a visual backdrop to Republican shenanigans, it was a daily reminder that not everyone bought into the lies and chicanery and Yuppie affectations that were gobbling up ethnic neighborhoods and gentrifying former lovably funky hangouts, like downtown fixtures D.C. space and the 9:30 Club, and Adams-Morgan's Madams Organ.

Still and all, graffiti without larger political motive gets old fast, at least to these eyes. I have no aesthetic objection to graffiti, except that its intent is more often than not merely to decorate, desecrate or float the tagger's alter ego. Most of it has no social action component and some folks would say it uglifies the urban landscape. I would agree with that if the graffiti appears, as it does in Europe, on cathedrals, monuments, or grand works of architecture; abandoned buildings and train tunnels on the other hand could use some decorating.

When you link the graffiti artists' energy, physical bravery and artistic integrity (they, obviously, don't get a penny for their efforts) to a political movement, you can change the world. Withness the anonymous proliferation of the red fist and peace sign in the 1960s or the shorthand of Poland's Solidarity movement. Wherever these things appeared, people were given hope, they were emboldened, because it told them that the old regime was collapsing. That is something we need in spades right now in America.

The how-to for this is on every page of Stencil Pirates by Josh MacPhee. It is one of the most inspiring books of its kind I've had the pleasure to peruse. It's also the most comprehensive primer on the delicate art of agit prop available to contemporary activists. MacPhee grew up in Massachusetts and was inspired by Seth Tobocman's World War 3 Illustrated the way us older stiffs were inspired by Mad. In 1992, MacPhee began stenciling the same walls in Washington D.C. that Gastman documents in Free Agents. MacPhee knows not just what methods work best, but what messages are the most undiluted and, thus, easy to understand without being simpleminded. It wasn't until I examined the examples in this book that it hit me how much more efficient and economical stencils are than than trying to endlessly re-draw the same message on sidewalks, vending machines, dumpsters, blighted buildings, interstate abutments. "All you need is a piece of cardstock, an exacto knife, and a can of spray paint," MacPhee writes. "In a single night, a stenciler can print hundreds of images."

Perhaps the best part of this book is that there's no hair-splitting, quibbling or soul-searching about the ethics or validity of this act of monkey wrenching. MacPhee takes it as a given that, if you're holding his book, you share his passion. And that's another great thing about Stencil Pirates. MacPhee's art is not graffiti. Stenciling is another matter.

The how-to for this is on every page of Stencil Pirates by Josh MacPhee. MacPhee offers a concise history of the artform, visual examples from around the world, and even some patterns created by eminent stencilers like Anton van Dalen and Claude Moller for readers to try out for themselves in their own communities.

So, what are you waiting for?

*****

One person who didn't wait around for someone else to make a stand is Jeff "Free" Luers. Jeff could use your help right now. In 2000, he was sentenced to more than 22 years in prison for burning three SUVs at a car dealership in Eugene, Oregon. His act of arson, in which no one was hurt, was intended to "call attention to climate change and to protest oil wars and environmental destruction." June 12 was the five-year anniversary of Jeff's imprisonment. When compared to the 10-year sentence given Abu Ghraid Prison torturer Charles Graner or the 18-year sentence the same judge gave another Oregon man for molesting children, Jeff's sentence is excessive and part of a concerted effort to repress domestic dissent. No one disputes that Jeff broke the law, but the average prison sentence for arson in Oregon is five years. HE DID THE CRIME AND HE HAS ALREADY SERVED HIS TIME. At this point, then, he's a political prisoner.

Jeff is not whining about what happened to him. He's not pissing and moaning; he's continuing to speak out from his cell. If you want more information about his case, check www.freefreenow.org, or write Jeff Luer's Defense Network, P.O. Box 3, Eugene, OR 97440. Drop him a line. Be a link in the chain.

ALAN BISBORT

August Entry:

WE WILL GET FOOLED AGAIN

In the past month, musicians young and old (The Cure, Pink Floyd, Roxy Music, Stevie Wonder, etc.) were rocking the planet to "make poverty history" as part of Live 8, a profit-making venture underwritten by AOL, which flogged it for weeks before and after.

At the same time, other ghostly figures from rock's past were shilling for the corporations that are turning us all into vassals, servants and wage slaves. To wit, Steve Miller—who before he became a joke as "The Joker," was defining his Woodstock era with classic songs like "Living in the U.S.A." and "Song For Our Ancestors"—was playing his Muzak-friendly "hits" for 400 corporate executives at an Atlanta business conference, as part of a presentation called "Benchmarking for Competitive Advantage." Miller, who now looks like a double for "Goober" on the old Andy Griffith Show, also gave a speech about maximizing his bottom line.

Miller must have taken his cue from David Bowie, that pompous poseur who started the whole corporate trend when he began selling bonds to investors in 1997, the dividends from which would be paid from royalties of future music. Then Michael Jackson bought the Beatles catalog and sold the songs as advertising jingles. Then Mick Jagger was knighted. Dennis Hopper, co-star and co-writer (with Terry Southern) of "Easy Rider," turned out to be a slimy pro-Bush Republican (as did the film director Oliver "The Doors" Stone) who screwed Southern out of his money when the latter was down and out.

Further proof: Jimmy Buffett, a piece of shit musician to begin with but one who has played on the "pirate renegade" image enough to hoodwink some otherwise intelligent people I know, was recently seen headlining a concert at the annual Wal-Mart "pep rally" in Fayetteville, Ark. Others participating in this circle jerk for the Evil Empire were Jon Bon Jovi and Garth Brooks. As a friend of mine put it, "they will all suck cocks in hell for this." Everywhere they go, Wal-Mart destroys communities, abuses workers and busts unions. They have 1,713 stores, 950 in progress, and plans to open 250 a year more over the next five years, ramming these things up the ass of communities by extorting and bullying and making promises they have no intention of keeping. And these people, these erstwhile musicians, are helping to celebrate this fact?!

It's no wonder that Generations X, Y and Z hate old hippies! They're the ultimate sellouts, because they once professed moral superiority for their vow to save the planet, live more simply and get back to nature. My favorite quote from the AP story was from a member of Widespread Panic, a Grateful Dead knockoff that has been retreading its soporific riffs and jams for two decades. Dig what this hippie said, man: "It's not about us and what we can do. We have to make all the numbers work so we can grow and keep enhancing the value for those fans."

Spoken like a real Republican! Blame it on the fans! Blame it on the people, man! The people made you money-grubbing merchants! Now we're talking! And so on. The examples of holier-than-thou counterculture heroes who turned out to be money grubbing predators is as long as John The Wad Holmes', uh, film credits.

It's enough to make me PUKE.

I'm not naive enough to think that it's tough making it as a musician, that people will rip you off right and left, that you have to take matters in your own hands. And I'm not one of those humorless twits who denounce hard-working punk bands as "sell outs" when they sign major label deals. But when I listen to millionaires like Miller, Bowie, Jagger, Richard, the dickheads in Metallica blather on about how tough they have it because people are downloading their shitty music, I just wanna holler: MEET THE NEW BOSS, SAME AS THE OLD BOSS.

*****

And now a word from the other side. That is, I want to recommend a book called Wobblies!: A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World, edited by Paul Buhle and Nicole Schulman. (Verso). This detailed chroncle of American history, told in the format of the graphic novel underscores an important truth: That corporate cubicle you inhabit was purchased at a high price.

The human cost, in lives lost, was in the millions—laborers killed on site or strikes, by ruined health from conditions, etc. The environmental cost of industrialization has been incalculable, though it's safe to say we've done more damage in the past 100 years, extracting our lifestyles from the earth, than humans did in the previous 15,000. The psychological cost: debilitating. Cut off from the source of goods, from the earth, from "reality," from our families, we waddle obesely around or drive in giant slabs of metal through a blighted countryside. Maybe our biggest loss, however, is that we're cut off from our own history, from those moments when people—sick and tired of the filthy few lording it over the vast multitude—gathered to do something good for themselves.

Take the Wobblies, the Industrial Workers of the World, ordinary labor organizers—hop pickers, coal miners, steel and textile workers—united across gender, race, ethnic and nationality lines who grabbed the big wigs by their short hairs and by their example inspired grassroots movements around the world. To commemorate the Wobblies' centennial and perhaps remind us of the successes grassroots movements can have, Verso has published this handsome volume, a "graphic history" in picture and word. The contributing artists include some of the most interesting and idiosynchratic (read: non-sellouts) among us: Sue Coe, Seth Tobocman, Peter Kuper, Josh MacPhee and Fly, as well as some names from the old underground, like Spain Rodriguez, Jay Kinney, Trina Robbins, Jay Kinney, Harvey Pekar. The results are an endlessly engaging, deeply felt and informed volume. Every page is a delight of detail and wit and inspiration. If todays workers could gather even a smidgen of the backbone and cojones of the likes of Big Bill Haywood, Joe Hill, Mary "Mother Jones" Harris, Carlo Tresca, Emma Goldman, Lucy Parsons or even (my favorite) Eugene V. Debs, folks like Ken Lay wouldn't be walking the streets and their puppets wouldn't be running our lives.

While it's fun to get lost in the nostalgia of past glory, such as what the Wobblies represent to the beleaguered anti-globalization and anti war brigades of 2005, it's also a mistake. As the volume also reminds us, just prior to facing a firing squad in Utah in 1915, Joe Hill said, "Don't waste any time in mourning—organize." Buy this volume and leave it in the break room. Overthrow your CEO! Unmask the corporate beast! Dress down every day! Sing and laugh at work! It's the American way.

Buried deep inside the Terri Schiavo media circus was another major story that, though not unrelated, may have an even more far reaching impact on the lives of American women—at least those American women who aren't brain dead. That is, reports have recently been made of pharmacists around the country refusing, on "moral and religious grounds," to fill prescriptions for birth control and so-called "morning after" pills. Doing so, these federally licensed shopkeepers have said, would be "violating their personal moral or religious beliefs."

This has been characterized by the mainstream press as "opening a new front in the battle over reproductive rights," but it is more than that. Emboldened by the attention garnered in their various crusades for posting Ten Commandments, teaching Creationism in public schools (while censoring evolution teachings), executing retarded and teenage offenders, criminalizing homosexuality, and denying families the right to make decisions for their terminally ill loved ones, the extremist right-wing has pushed their Taliban-inspired agenda into the mainstream with precious little resistance.

However, when this agenda ends up behind shop counters—as it has with these witless pharmacists—the battle lines have entered new and dangerous territory. If the nation's elected officials and consumers don't collectively push back, then the extremist agenda will simply, by default, BECOME the mainstream. If you want to see what sort of world that would create, rent the film Vera Drake, Mike Leigh's brilliant, sad and sobering account of 1950s England.

Put aside, for a moment, the legal and ethical violations these shopkeepers are committing. Let's cut to the chase. What is really going on here? I believe it's this simple: the far right wing can't stand women. They can't stand young and unmarried women having sex. They can't even stand the idea of married women having sex with their husbands not intended to produce a (hopefully Aryan) baby. They want to intervene in every area of our lives, peruse what we read, scan what we watch, have a look at the photos we develop, poke their noses in our bank accounts and medical records.

This latest crusade started with Wal-Mart, whose policy states: "Wal-Mart does not carry emergency contraceptives. Our pharmacists may decline to fill a prescription based on personal convictions. However, they must find another pharmacist, either at Wal-Mart or another pharmacy, who can assist you by filling your prescription."

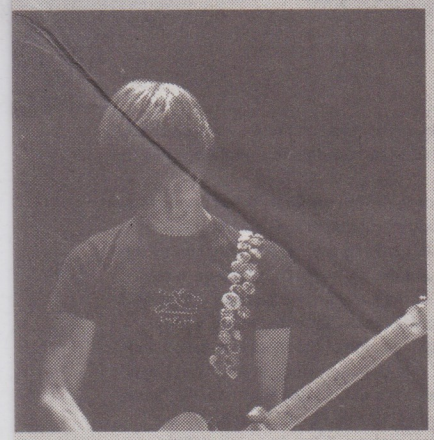
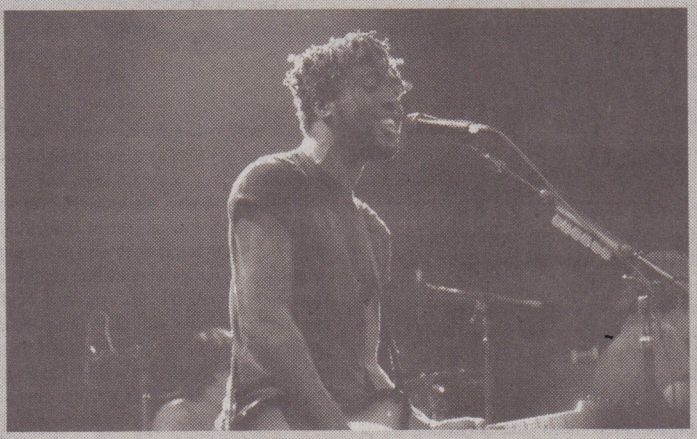
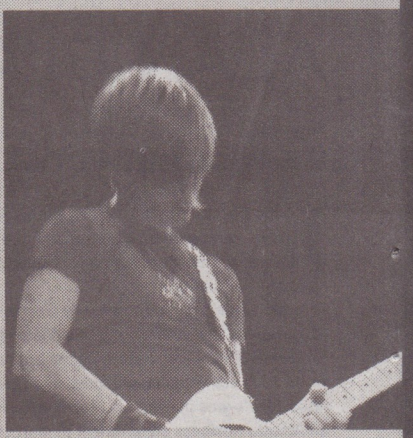
By this logic, a Wal-Mart employee in sporting goods who morally objects to killing animals for sport could refuse to sell guns to hunters. An environmentalist gas station attendant should therefore be allowed to refuse to pump gas into Hummers or SUVs, bookshop clerks should be able to refuse to sell copies of Tom Clancy novels because of "morally shitty writing," and vegetarian grocery store clerks refuse to ring up meat purchases. Likewise, on "moral grounds," I could refuse to allow right wing fundamentalists to read my column.

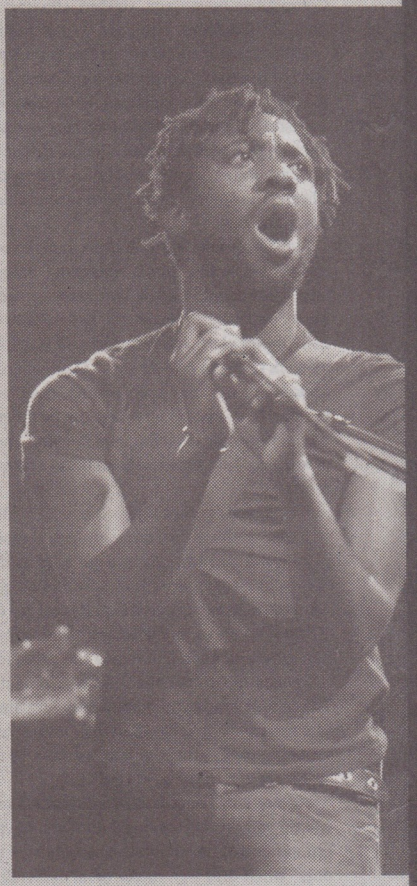
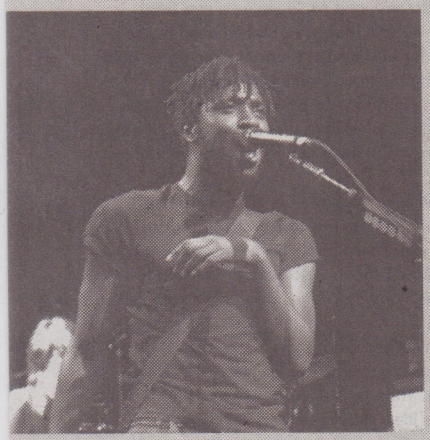
Alan Bisbort is a columnist for the Hartford Advocate. His biography of Caryl Chessman, the Death Row author, will be published by Carroll & Graf in Fall 2006.

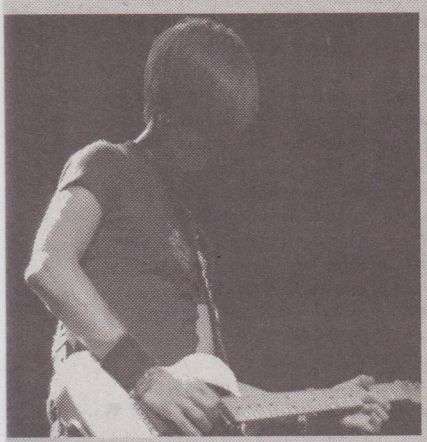
BLOC PARTY

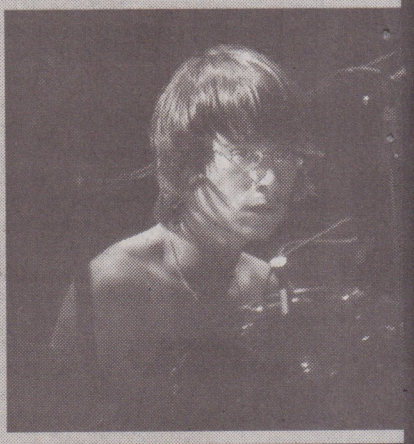
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HOUSTON CALLS





INTERVIEW WITH VOCALIST AND GUITARIST TOM CHITTY

By John McKay / Photography By Eric Smith/Broken Focus

New Jersey, the state perhaps most responsible for polarizing the indie music scene, is an unlikely breeding ground for HOUSTON CALLS. With locals THURSDAY, SAVES THE DAY and MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE stealing headlines and magazine covers (and forging love/hate relationships with punk purists) with their LIFETIME-influenced hooks and breakdowns, HOUSTON CALLS stands out in that they DON'T sound like the seminal melodic hardcore band. At all. Rather than whining or screaming or distorting guitars, HOUSTON CALLS tap The CARS and The REUNION SHOW, serving up a bouncy, incredibly likeable, Ed Rose-produced debut, *A Collection of Short Stories*, for Drive Thru imprint Rushmore Records.

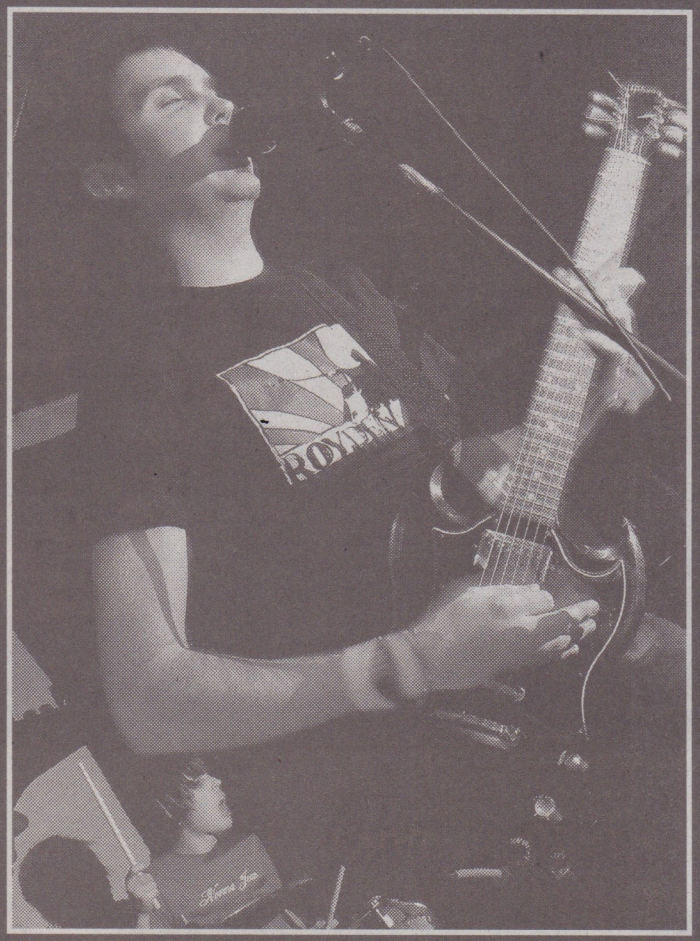
So how did you end up hooking up with Rushmore Records for your debut, A Collection of Short Stories?
Back in the day we used to play in another band (me, the bass player and the keyboard player), and Drive Thru had put out our first CD, back in like, 1999. They paid for it but didn't actually release it on their label. We had known them for a good amount of time, and we started our new band in May 2003. We just kept sending them demos, and then we were on tour with HELLOGOODBYE and HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW, and they came to watch their bands and saw us play. A couple days later they told us they wanted to sign us.

Did you have any reservations about signing with a fairly new imprint that didn't have an established track record yet?
No, I was actually pretty excited about doing that because it's sort of like embarking on a new voyage, if you will. It's kind of still Drive Thru, but it's got a new name, so it's related to Drive Thru, but stands as a separate entity, as well. So I'm excited to start with something new, something fresh.

The first time I heard you was on *Dead and Dreaming: A Tribute to Counting Crows*. You covered the song, "Einstein on the Beach." What gave you the idea to appear on the compilation and cover that particular song?
Well, me and the bass player Jarrett have always been really big fans of COUNTING CROWS since we were in like, middle school, so we were contacted by the girl Jess who put out the comp, and she asked if we wanted to do a song, and we said, "Of course." She said to pick a song, and we liked this song that was a b-side on some random DGC Rarities compilation. We thought it was an incredibly catchy song, so it worked well with our style.

I realized that; the cover sounded





really faithful to the CROWS' version, but also sounded like it was written for your new album.
Exactly. It kind of worked. It kind of fit in with our whole idea, our whole musical style.

You had two years between starting HOUSTON CALLS and recording your first album. How did you guys build a following and draw some attention to your band?
We were trucking along on self-booked tours and stuff like that.

Do you think that having the hook up with Rushmore/Drive Thru, booking your own DIY tours won't be a problem anymore?
Hopefully not, because anyone who has probably done it before knows that it's an incredibly hard task.

Yeah, it sucks.
Yeah, it sucks a lot. It's really tough. A lot of shit happens with it and you can't really control it. On bigger tours, there's contracts involved and things like that. We just got picked up by Variety Artists for booking, so they're doing our booking now, actually. So hopefully things will come a lot easier, now.

So you just finished recording *A Collection of Short Stories*. Tell us about writing the record and recording with Ed Rose.
We went to Eudora, KS to record with Ed Rose. We started writing – and some of the songs on this CD are the first songs we had written as HOUSTON CALLS, and one song on there is the first song we wrote as a band. The rest of the songs were written in the past year or so, pretty much. There's a few we had released on our two samplers we put out, in 2004 to 2003. But most of the album was written, pretty much, in the past year.

How was Ed Rose?
I wasn't too sure what our experience was going to be like, I had read one or two things about him being like, a really tough leader/producer, and I wasn't really sure how we were going to mesh with him. We actually kicked it pretty hard, it was pretty cool. We actually ended up going out to a strip club with him.

That's pretty incriminating.
Yeah, it is incriminating. But that's okay.

So what are your summer plans? Who are you touring with?
We leave in about a week (from date of interview) for a tour with HELLOGOODBYE, The ROCKET SUMMER and JAMISONPARKER. Hopefully that will get a nice buzz going. Then the CD will come out a week or two after the tour is over.

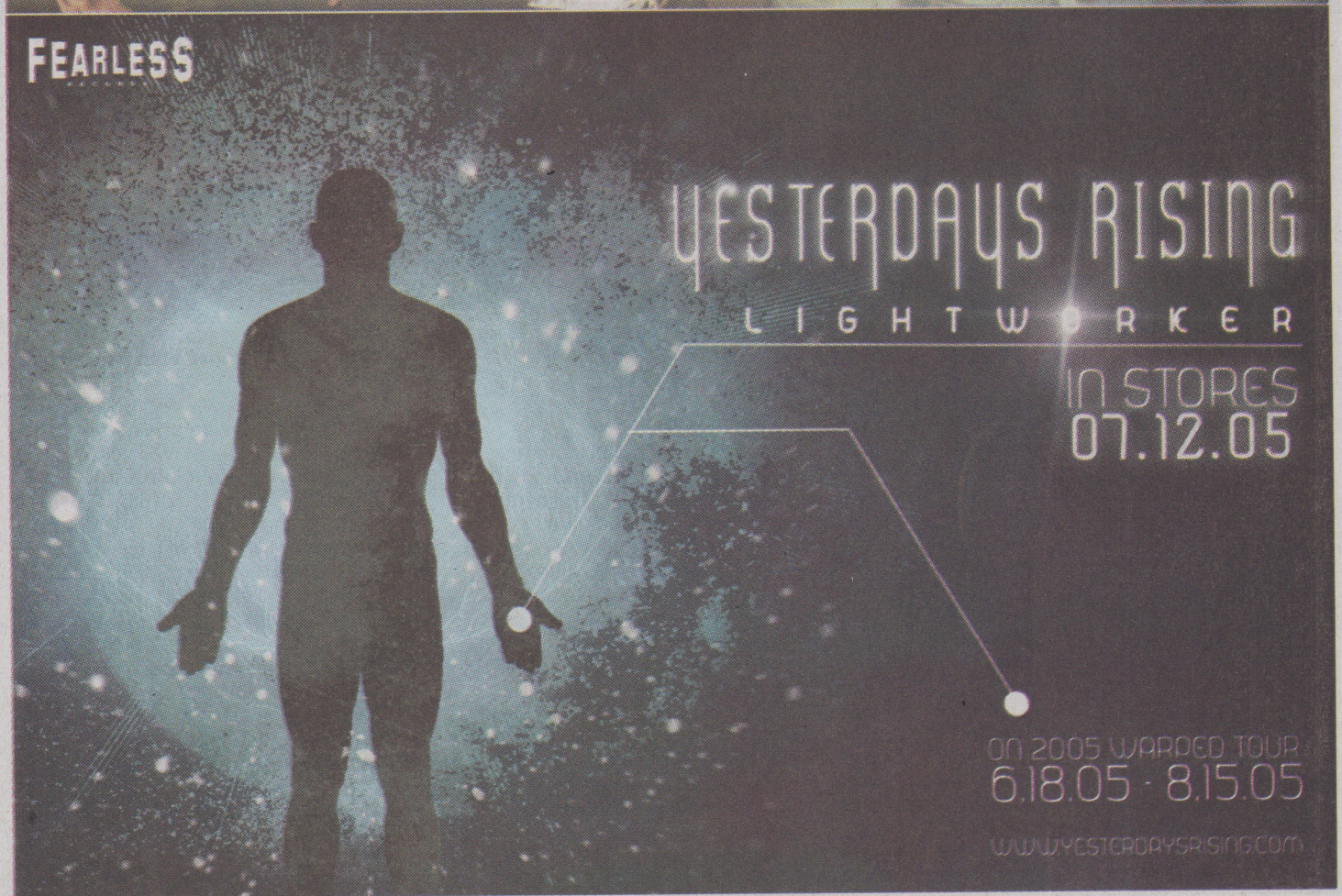
So you're playing larger clubs on this tour, I take it?
Yeah, we're probably playing the biggest clubs we've played so far, like the House of Blues in Anaheim, stuff like that.

Which of the DIY tours was the most fun?
Our bass player actually put together a tour last year that was one of the earlier AbsolutePunk.net tours. It was an AbsolutePunk/PureVolume tour. It was HELLOGOODBYE, us, HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW and MADISON. That was the first tour that was pretty awesome for us. A lot of kids went to those shows, and those were the first big shows we started playing. It was pretty sweet.

HOUSTON CALLS has a tour scheduled with AMBER PACIFIC and SHERWOOD following the release of A Collection of Short Stories, which is due Aug. 2 on Rushmore/Drive Thru Records.

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An interview with

Greg MacPherson

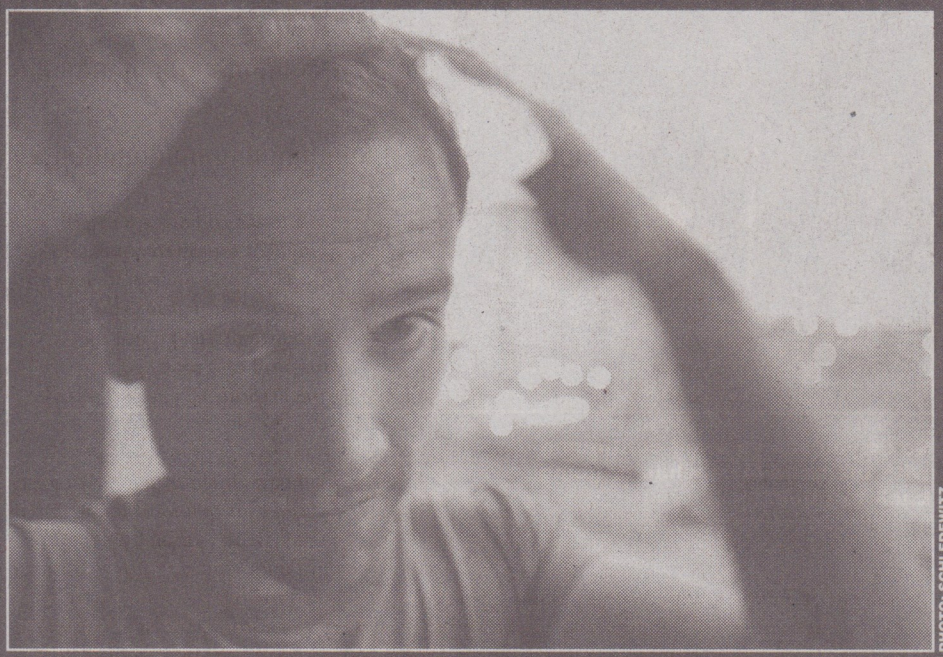


PHOTO: SCHLEDEWITZ

By Adam White

I caught up with Winnipeg's Greg MacPherson on his tour in support of his latest record Night Flares. He and his band, a touring line up featuring guitarist / bassist Mike Germain and Propagandhi drummer Jord Samolesky, rolled into Guelph a week too late. Exams had wrapped up and the university population had already dispersed, but it meant for a nice intimate show at the E-Bar with Toronto's Maps Of The Night Sky.

As he took the stage the sound tech expressed concern that Greg's guitar was buzzing, to which he replied something like, "this guitar's over 50 years old, it started buzzing 10 years ago and it's not going to stop tonight" before launching into his first song. It's that same rough-hewn, starkly honest sensibility that shines through Greg's music and has earned him accolades from across the country.

How has the tour been going so far?
Great! Very well. We've been getting bigger crowds in every city and it's been a while since I've been able to tour with a band and it's fun for me. It's been really, really well received. People have been buying the record and stuff so the record company is happy and that makes me feel good, too.

So have you been paying attention to the reviews that have come out?
I try to ignore them more often than not. Sometimes if there's something particularly good Derek at G7 will say "hey you should read that, it's well done" but most of the time I don't really care for the information I receive through reviews. It can be erroneous. It doesn't really strike a chord with me. If you read negative... and you know artists, we're all sensitive freaks... if you read negative reviews it can kind of stick in your mind even though it's just worthless information.

So do you try to avoid them when you're on tour specifically?
Yeah, I don't usually read them... but so far though I've seen only good reviews!

That's mostly what I've seen as well. So between Good Times and Night Flares you toured a lot, and through that increased the amount of people who were aware of you. So did it feel like there was more pressure to deliver this time, with such a larger audience aware of your work?
No, not at all actually. I don't really consider that stuff. I treat my music very personally so I felt pressure from myself to do a better job this time than I did on Good Times. I feel like I've just been growing and that my best work's ahead of me, so when I was going into the recording process this time I definitely felt like there were some things I wanted to improve on for myself, but I didn't really think much of what other people were going to say about it. I figure I'm my harshest critic so if I can please myself than most people will generally be OK with what I put out.

Now you toured pretty extensively as a solo act, so do you draw a distinction personally between "Greg MacPherson the man" and the "Greg MacPherson Band" or is it all part of the same continuity?
Yeah, I think it is for the most part. I think that the band and the solo shows are different, but I think there both good in different ways. You have some negatives about touring solo that you don't get with the band and vice versa. For example, if you tour with a band you have to pay the band, you have to rent a bigger vehicle, pay for gas, pay for hotels, and all those kinds of things if you need them. If you tour solo you don't have to do any of that stuff. You can rent a small car and tour extensively on your own. You can call the shots when you're by yourself. I can visit people if I want, I can do whatever I want, right? But the only problem with that is when touring solo I don't have anyone to share the driving with. In Canada, for example, it's ridiculous. There are so many spaces between shows. If I drive from Saskatoon to Edmonton by myself that's a 7 to 8 hour drive. It gets pretty exhausting. So it's a balancing act and some of the positives outweigh the negatives both ways. But, I look at it all as one thing. I just love performing whether it's with a band or as a solo act. I think performance is as much as a creative period for me as writing songs. It's part of the work that I do.

Does it put you in a different head space to walk out on stage, and it's

just you, compared to walking out there with three other guys?
I think it's mostly the same thing. I go out and try to accomplish the same things. Playing music for me is something that I learn a lot about myself from. I go out on stage and I don't know how I'm going to react at any given moment, all of the factors that play into it come together on any given day, any given venue, a different sound system. It depends on the crowd, it depends on the weather outside, all these things can make for a different spin on the show. So having a band here is sort of similar to that, but I think my mindset at any given show is usually the same: Just go out and try and push myself as far as I can. That's basically what I try to do.

Now there were a couple of shared writing credits on the record. Was writing this time more of a collaborative process, because it was with a band, or did you come in with finished material?
There's a song or two on there on which Steve Bates gave me a guitar part of his and I'd work with that: take his guitar part and maybe add some more on top of that, and that's where the collaboration came in. There's one song on there that's entirely Steve's music I just sang over it as well, a song called "Pressure." And then Mike Germain and I were in another band at one time and we jammed up this one song that's on the record now called "Cutting Room." So that's how the collaboration came in. Also during the recording process those two guys had a lot of influence on me in terms of our aesthetic and some of the decisions we made in terms of guitar sounds and parts, how songs were fleshed out. They had a lot of influence on the final sound.

When you look at songs like "The Show Is In The Basement" you have the end of the song where it comes to it's peak and then loudly rocks out at the end. Those are the kind of moments where it seems that only come up with when you have a group of people to bounce it off of, because the arrangement is so key.
Yeah! Well the arrangement I actually came up with myself, but having people you can depend on to perform those parts is really key for me. Steve Bates: I knew, if I explained it to him in a proper way he would actually play what was in my head. You know what I mean? That's the greatest thing, if you can find people who are so like-minded in their aesthetic that you can trust them and just explain what you are looking for and they'll take it and run with it. So Steve and Mike are basically, for me, they're key to the way I'm going with my music. They've been really, really good for me to play with for sure. I think they're two of the best guitar players in the country, actually.

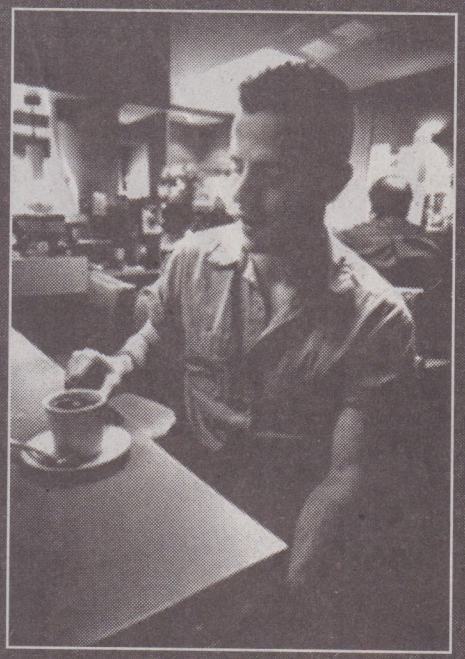

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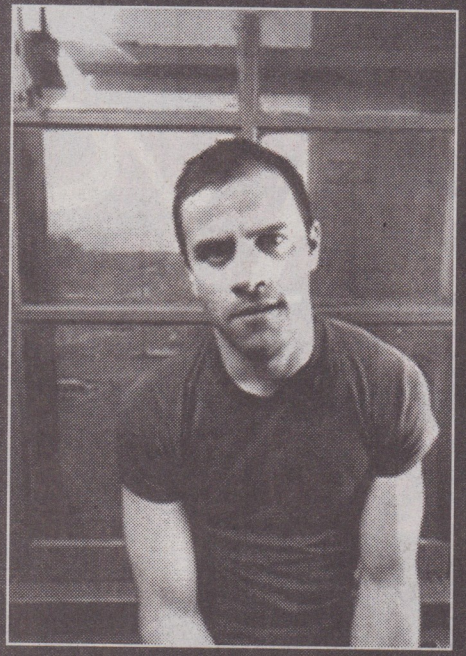
So do you see yourself continuing with the band for a while or going back to solo?
It really depends on availability. I quite enjoy playing solo. I don't ever turn down solo gigs. I like to play by myself or with a band, whoever's available depending on the distance. Like if I tour the United States, I can't take a band with me because I can't afford to. If I tour in Europe I can't take a band with me because I can't afford to either. I still play folk festivals sometimes, or basement shows where they might be more inclined to hire a solo act. For a basement show it would just be easier on people's ears if I played by myself. So that's usually how it's worked for me, I'll apply the line up to whatever the gig calls for. I'd like to play more with a band, to be honest with you, but it's mostly a matter of expense for me. It's hard to pay for everybody.

You mentioned touring the States, does it feel different touring in the US than touring in Canada? Does the name go further here?
I haven't done a whole lot of touring in the States, but the times I've gone down there I've done fairly well. I think the people relate to the things I'm saying in my music pretty much the same on both sides of the border, but that being said I don't think anyone can go to the United States right now without feeling a little bit, you know, maybe worried for their safety. (Laughs) Do you know what I mean? So that comes into play. Whenever I've done shows down there I'm very conscious of the fact that it's a foreign country, even though we're raised and live with them in every facet of our lives. You can't help but be aware of it, but I think that people have been very positive towards my music and I feel very fortunate. No matter what the audience is it seems that people can relate to it, which very exciting. It's not really what I intend necessarily, when I'm writing I write for me, but it's a gift that people actually can enjoy it as well.

I'm going to switch gears here: The Junos. They were hosted in Winnipeg this year and you performed as part of Junofest. Now the G7 claims you were inciting violence against the attendees, so what's the story?
Well I don't know if I was "inciting violence." I made a flippant remark at the end of my set...

"If you see someone wearing a laminate, punch them in the face."
Yeah, that's what I said. "If you see someone wearing a laminate, punch them in the face." Basically I turned the Juno show down a couple of times. They kept asking me and offering me more money and I said, well no I'm not interested in playing the Junos. And then they offered me a bunch of money and allowed me to call the shots! (Laughs) So I told them I didn't want to play after midnight, I wanted a certain amount of money, I wanted some food, I wanted a bunch of people on the guest list and that was it. I don't want to talk to anybody and I just want to play the show and have a good time. Then they said "Ok! That sounds great!" So with that sort of setup it was really easy for me to say, yes this is just another gig at the Albert. But the Junos themselves I find pretty distasteful. I had a few chances, and I took them, to say some things about the Junos that I think are good. I'm pleased that I said that. I think the people there realized I was saying it pretty tongue and cheek and I don't think the people there were really going to go punch people with laminates in the face. But I think the people wearing the laminates may







have questioned their own place in that event and how they're being perceived by the rest of us. I hope that they would know that not everyone thinks that they were VIPs. I think that a lot of the people wearing laminates, the delegates at that kind of event, are quite parasitic in terms of the music that's being made.

Now you're so ingrained in what's going on locally in Winnipeg does it feel like you were being intruded upon by this greater music industry? They show up for a few days and all of a sudden the whole country's focused on Winnipeg in terms of music but not in terms of musicians from Winnipeg, it's stars that they're flying in.
Yeah, for lack of a better way to put it, it's a very Toronto-centric sort of event. The establishment of the music industry is certainly located, or at least works out of Toronto. I don't think there's much of an argument about that. So you take the Junos, you can put them in any city, but they're originally from there. The people who work the Junos, by and large, the people running the show, are from Toronto and part of the greater music industry. I think that it did feel somewhat intrusive. It wasn't like this was a native Winnipeg event that Winnipeggers were hosting and taking the idea of the Junos and running with it. No, it was like "here's the prescription, I want you to fill it. Here's the schematic. This is what you do. Go do it, and we'll show you how to do it and we'll run it for you." And the people who are voted in, all of the artists (if you want to call them that) who were winning Junos, they had nothing to do with the Winnipeg music scene. So I don't know, I found it pretty gross. I think award shows are a waste of time, especially award shows that pretend to celebrate the best of something when the best of something, in their mind, is sales based.

Now you've been releasing your records through the G7, and you're obviously quite close with them since Jord of Propagandhi is drumming for you. Since it's seen by a lot of people as a political punk label, do you see yourself as a political punk rocker or are you more comfortable being listed as a singer/songwriter? Do the labels matter?
I don't know if G7 would describe themselves as punk anymore, to be honest with you, I think that term's been co-opted and watered down to the point where it's meaningless. But definitely I think the activist and political side of the label is very strong. It's something that's our common bond, besides just being friends, I think that we're all like-minded in terms of our ideology and the way we view the world. We're all socially minded people who want to do good things and we all happen to love music. We love music to the point where we'll live in the gutter if it means we can make it. I don't think any of us are doing extraordinarily well in terms of our finances or anything like that, but the label continues and is flourishing. We're all getting better at what we do and we're growing together and I'm excited to be part of it. It's a great cornerstone of all that is good in terms of music in Winnipeg, as far as I can see.

Now I'm actually going to tell you a story here and I'm sure you've heard lots like it. "Company Store" is arguably the song that's most requested when you're playing live, and it struck me on a personal level because my family was there. My grandfather actually worked in the Sydney mines. He was an Italian immigrant whose job was to go every two or three feet into the shaft under the Atlantic, drill a little hole, and drop the explosives in. It was the most dangerous job on earth, yet then the war came along and they fired him because the land of his birth was now the enemy. So because my family worked in those mines that song really resonates with me. When you're writing history-based songs like that, do you get people who come up to you like this and tell their side of the story?
Absolutely. I'd say that I get both, people who were from Cape Breton or the Maritimes or people have family who were from there like yourself. It's because it was a heavily populated area where people since emigrated across the country. So there's a lot of old Cape Bretoners or people related to them who relate on a personal level. But one of the things that surprised me was that fact that the song seems to resonate with people in different parts of the country and in different parts of North America. I remember singing that song in Florida and a Cuban immigrant came up to me after the show and said, "that song really moved me." I remember him in particular being very vocal about his response to it, which surprised me. Cuba's about as far removed from Cape Breton as you can imagine, but I think the themes from that song, of resistance, action, frustration, or just social conflict, those things are very, very much common across our continent and our world. It's pretty exciting for me that people like that song so much. I mean aesthetically it doesn't always feel current, but I enjoy performing it because there's a lot of passion in the song and in the reaction to it. Depending on the audience I sing it to it can be really exciting for me no matter how old it is.

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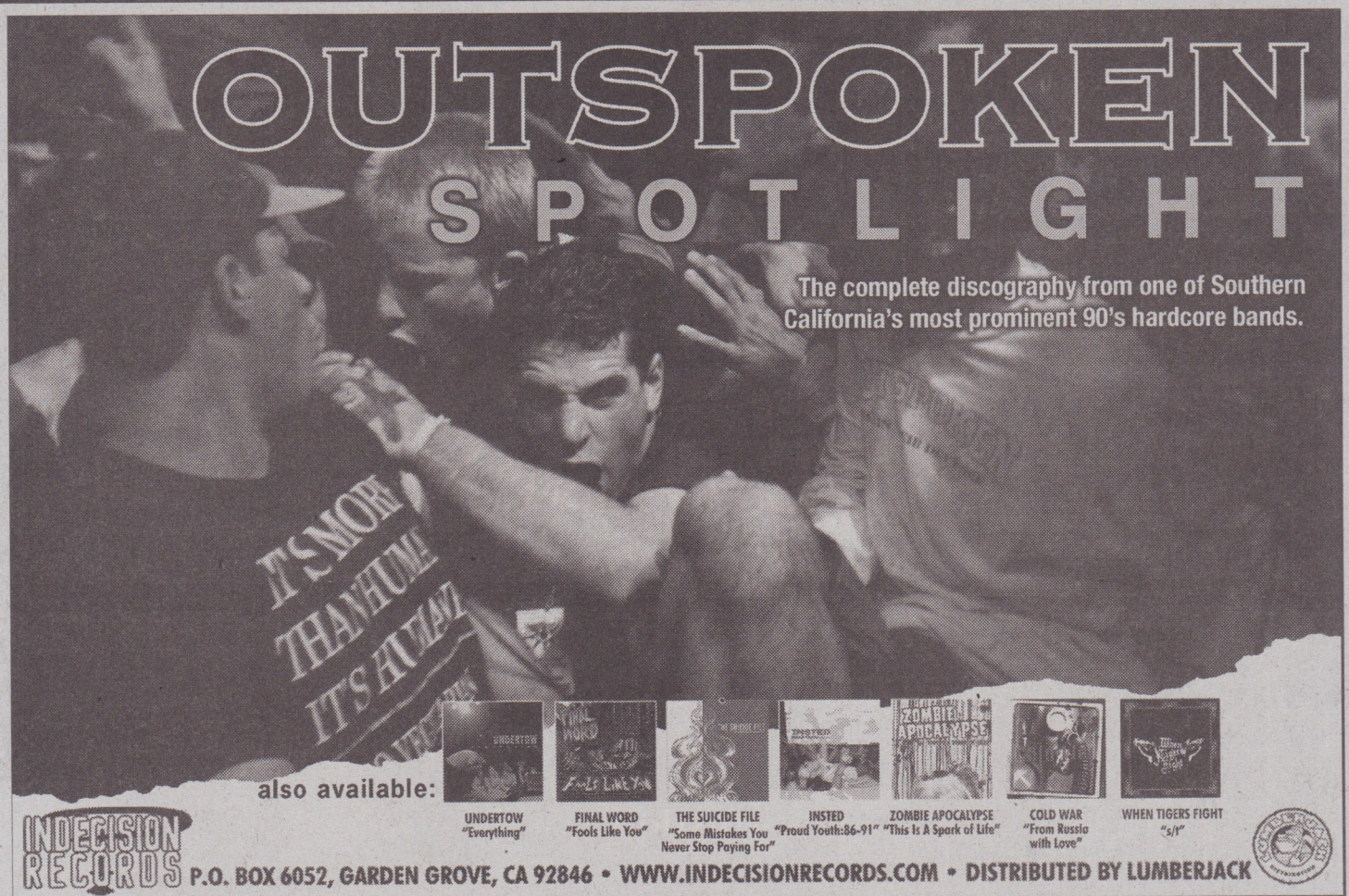
RAPID FIRE

SHORT INTERVIEWS FOR SHORT ATTENTION SPANS



Profile: Crash And Burn

Name: Billy Brown
Position in the Band: Vocalist, Guitarist
Hometown: Manchester, CT
Crash And Burn sounds like: We get compared a lot to Black Flag, Motorhead, Zeke, Guns n' Roses and early Neurosis. I guess it's just really aggressive rock and roll with punk and metal mixed in.
Our label, Thorp Records, is cool because: They're putting out a lot of great stuff like Blood for Blood and Ramallah. Not to mention they put out our record and they actually give a shit about promoting it.
Four CD's that are influencing me the most right now are:
Blood for Blood – Serenity, Nuisance - Confusion Hill, Miles Davis – On the Corner, and High on Fire – Blessed Black Wings
Best thing to do in the van is: Chainsmoke and talk shit.
Worst driving incident involved: We were just finishing up a US tour, having been out for a little over a month. We were driving from Montana to Denver when we hit a patch of black ice and spun out. The van hit the guardrail and then spun completely around facing us forward and smashing in the front end. When we got out of the van to check out the damage, another car hit the same patch of black ice and came barreling towards us. We were behind the van so we would've been crushed between the two. Luckily, we saw the headlights and jumped over the guardrail right before the car smashed into the back of our van, destroying the van and most of our gear in the process. The next day a friend of ours from Missoula came and picked us up and we sold the cabinets from our amps to get some money towards getting home.
Boston has influenced my music how? I've been living in Boston for over a decade now and like most cities it's full of noise and tension. The weather here is generally either freezing cold or blisteringly hot so I think some of that unpleasantness and conflict comes through in our music.
The kids these days are: Smarter than a lot of labels, radio, and press give them credit for. They can tell when they're being spoon-fed crap.
Broken Ribs or Righteous Hangover? Righteous Hangover. I broke two ribs playing a show once and it's no fun, let me tell you.
Motorhead or Black Flag? Black Flag. Motorhead is great and all, but Black Flag is why I started playing music to begin with.
Boston or New York? Boston. New York is fun, but I love Boston. There's more of a sense of community.
When we're not on tour we earn our living by: I work for a non profit cancer research place filing papers and such, Phil works for a medical lab making sure biopsy slides get to their proper homes, Brendan is the super of an apartment building and works in construction, and Joe works for a lighting company.
Upcoming tours or releases: We'll be doing six shows on the Warped tour this August, from the 10th in DC, to the 15th in Boston. We'll be touring more extensively in the fall. We just released our new record, The Value of Mistrust, on Thorp and you should get it. It's really good.
Best Bad Religion disc? Either 80-85 or Suffer.
Favorite thing about playing shows: The release it provides. It just makes whatever concerns and bullshit you're dealing with disappear. It's a hell of a lot cheaper than a shrink.
Band that still gives me the chills when I see them live: Well, if James Brown would stop smoking PCP and play again, then it would be him. Otherwise I'd have to say it's a toss up between Weedeater and the Unseen. Both those bands are amazing live.
Web info:
www.crashandburn1.com
www.myspace.com/crashandburn



CHIMAIRA

By Don Sill

"At first we had some doubts about what we were doing but then we got out of the rut and then things began moving forward," said CHIMAIRA front man Mark Hunter who, along with guitarist Rob Arnold and super-producer Colin Richardson, was busy in the U.K. mixing their latest album, CHIMAIRA on Roadrunner Records. "Everything is going really good now. It's tedious, but good. [Laughs]"

The "rut" Hunter describes began just after CHIMAIRA ended a rather tedious marathon, which consisted of a two-year road trek in support of their most successful album, The Impossibility Of Reason that clocked 330 shows in 21 countries.

For two solid years Hunter and his mates played to thousand of amazing fans week after week including a headlining tour with LAMB OF GOD, a run with Ozzfest



"WE GOT COCKY, WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE EASY" CHIMAIRA'S MARK HUNTER ON LATEST ALBUM



2003, the Jagermeister Spring 2004; a co-headlining gig with MACHINE HEAD on the Road Rage tour and a spate of European festivals. Needless to say the band was on top of their game and when the time came to record another album Hunter and company assumed they would easily hop into the studio and bang out a new album within a month...Welcome to the "rut."

"We got cocky. We thought it would be easy," admits Hunter with a laugh. In fact there would be nothing easy about this album at all. After a few days of working on their new music the front man realized that he had completely underestimated the process and as a result tensions ran high in the practice studio. Soon the band concluded that what they needed was some time apart. "We were constantly together for so long and it just kinda felt like nobody wanted to be in the same room with each other," says the vocalist, "There was some tension and we all needed a break. I didn't go to practice for like three weeks."

After a few weeks of much needed R&R Hunter and his mates regrouped, refocused and began writing their third album last October. "We thought we'd get this done in a month and here we are seven months later, [laughs]." What was passed off as "easy' ultimately became their biggest challenge.

But CHIMAIRA persevered, climbed from their "rut" and created an album that truly refuses to fit any stylistic format. "We took a different approach on this record," explained Hunter. "At first we were kinda concerned about what people would think but then after we all took time off and came back we just didn't give a shit about what was going on with other bands and we didn't care about anything else that we've already done in the past."

CHIMAIRA makes it clear that not only do they not give a shit about past trends but the band has evolved and are now far ahead of the curve. "Our main goal was not to copy ourselves," continued the front man. "We liked a lot of the things we did on The Impossibility Of Reason and we knew we had some areas to strengthen, but the main thing we wanted to do was take away every restraint we put on ourselves and toss them right out the window."

By throwing past restraints out the window the Cleveland sextet have fine tuned and honed their style so deftly, that this album truly represents everything CHIMAIRA were, everything CHIMAIRA are, and everything CHIMAIRA are destined to become. "This album is everything that you love about CHIMAIRA and multiply that by ten," gushed Hunter. "We broke out of our shell with this one."

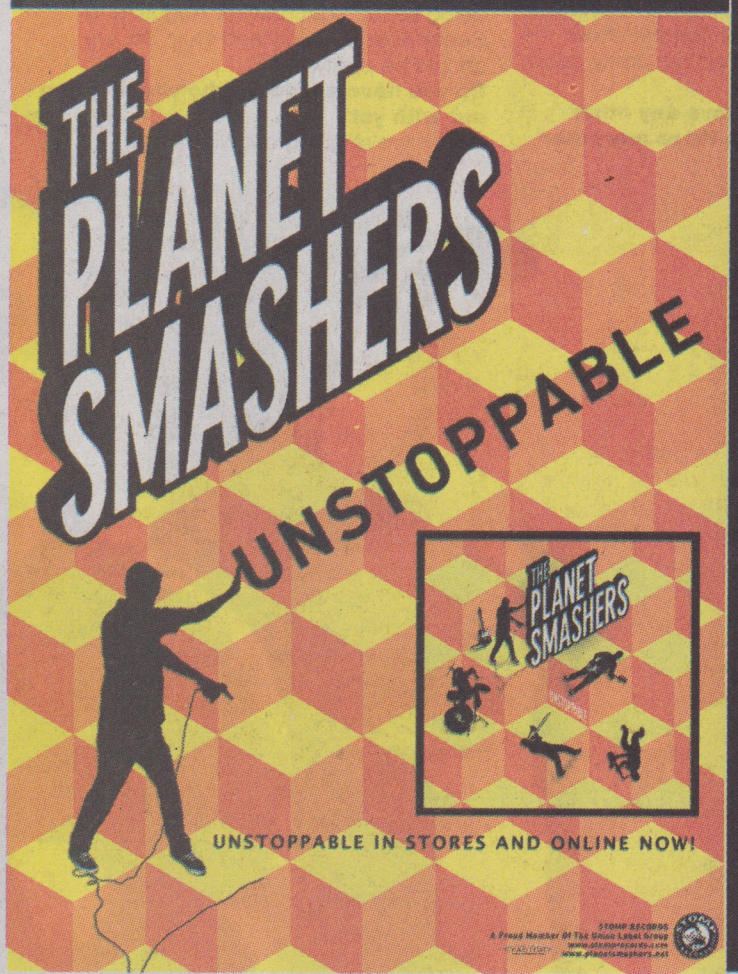
Time proved to be of the essence as it gave the band time to crack from their shell and emerged at their most musical and most intimidating. Rob Arnold's guitar solos have matured, as did Chris Spicuzza's ambient/electronic element, which added an additional dynamic to CHIMAIRA's overall sound. Says Hunter, "The biggest compliment I got was after we did a live show and played one of the new songs a fan came up to me and said that when he heard the new song he knew immediately that it was a CHIMAIRA song- and that is exactly what we were trying to achieve. We wanted to evolve but still have a signature sound. We really wanted to achieve that."

From sinking into a "rut" to achieving their goals- that is CHIMAIRA. Hunter along with Matt DeVries- Guitars; Rob Arnold – Guitars; Jim LaMarca – Bass; Chris Spicuzza - Electronics and Kevin Talley – Drums have built a career from battling the odds and coming out victorious every time.

Catch CHIMAIRA this summer when they join the Sounds Of The Underground tour with DEVIL DRIVER, POISON THE WELL, LAMB OF GOD and many more metal and hardcore acts. For more info log to CHIMAIRA's official website:

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SO THEY SAY

By Jon Morrill

Ladies and Gents, meet your new favorite band: So They Say, the newest darlings of Fearless Records and the best thing to come out of St. Louis, Missouri since Albert Pujols and Anheuser-Busch. Being dubbed by their label as "The Year of the Say," 2005 will see the group release their self-titled debut in mid-June, hit the road until the wheels of their van fall off, and on an upcoming 80's throwback compilation, make Rod Stewart cool again. I was able to catch up with bassist and all around nice guy Chris Dickey and talk to him about lots of stuff—including just how crazy it is to be one of the new kids on the punk rock block.

So, how're you doing man?
Good, good! Just got done eating some Seafood Sensation at Subway [laughs]
Ha ha, awesome. So, your debut record just came out. How did recording go for you?
Oh, it was awesome. It was really cool, recording and everything. It's really exciting, you know, being able to do something like that. Being able to be like, "Hey! We don't have to pay for this!" That kind of thing. You're like quoting me right now, aren't ya? [laughs]
Ha ha, yeah. I've got you on a recorder right now, is that cool?
[laughs] Yeah... I just... I don't know... ha ha, that's fine.
Where did you guys record at and who produced it?
Um, actually we did it at this place called Sonic Temple in Union, Missouri—and we actually produced it. All the songs were originally done by us and we had [Jason McIntyre] record it for us.
How did you get hooked up with Fearless Records?
Well, we sent them a demo and they hit us back on MySpace and said, "We really like it!" and that sort of thing. And then they wanted us to come out to them, so we drove out there to California from St. Louis, Missouri for one show; for one shot and it turned out pretty good [laughs].
I guess so! Did you have any other labels in mind? Were there any other ones who had offers on the table?
There was a little talk with other labels and stuff, but we were pretty much set on Fearless.
Nice. I saw that you guys are on Fearless' "Punk Goes 80's" compilation and are doing a Rod Stewart song. What made you choose 'Forever Young'?
Well, Mikey, our guitar player—its one of his favorite songs, and it was kind of funny: we were all talking about Rod Stewart and then [Fearless] came to us and said, "Hey, do you want to do 'Punk Goes 80's'?" And so we said, "Hey! Yeah! We should totally do that song!" So, it was kind of funny the way it all panned out.
Did it come out well?
Yeah, we were really impressed with it. We did that with Jason McIntyre, too, and that was all done by us also. We were pretty impressed and really happy about it.
So what's next for So They Say now that your E.P is out? Do you have plans to go on the Warped Tour or make videos or anything like that?
Yeah, um, we are going out June 18th through the 22nd on the Warped Tour on the SmartPunk stage, so that should be pretty interesting. And there's also tours being set up right now for August and September and July and stuff. So, we should be pretty busy!
Do you have any idea who you're going out with yet?
I know we're going out with The



Receiving End of Sirens and, I think Scary Kids Scaring Kids are going to be on that, too. So, yeah, we're really stoked about that.

I saw you guys were from St. Louis and there really isn't much music coming out from that part of the country except for stuff like Nelly, and so I was just wondering are there any bands from St. Louis that we should keep an eye out for?

There's probably a couple. There's actually a lot of talent up and coming in St. Louis. I don't know, I'd have to list like eight bands or something, you know. But we're just kind of close with all of them so they're all our friends, so that's pretty cool. But one band I would have to say is a band called Sophomore. They're a good band.

If you could pick three bands that you could go out with on your first tour, who would they be? Like, dream come true bands.

Oh, wow. I don't know... that's a tough one. Um, I think all the guys would pick... For me, I'd have to say Thrice, definitely. For Dave, probably Journey or Killswitch Engage or something [laughs] Mikey, would probably be... man, that's a tough question! And then we've got the drummer with all the Mars Volta and Circa Survive and stuff—he's all into that. Everybody's into way different stuff, different kinds of music. Its cool, it all works out. I'd probably overall like Thrice because they're just awesome.

[we go on for a bit with some unrelated 'Thrice is awesome!' banter] Mikey would also probably say Story of the Year 'cause he's all friends with them and everything.

Oh yeah? How's that?

Well they're from here too.

Oh wow, I never knew Story of the Year were from St. Louis...

Yep! They're from "the Lou" [laughs]

What was your favorite record of 2004?

Man! Another tough one! Favorite record?

Ha ha, yeah. You can just name a couple, you don't have to name just one.

Alright... was Brand New's album 2004?

Deja Entendu? Nah, I'm pretty sure that was 2003.

Ah, man-then I don't know. There are so many good bands, I don't know. The new Fall Out Boy is really good, I'd say... Circa Survive is the favorite for some of the members of the band. Armor For Sleep...

Yeah! That's a really good one, I love that album.

Yeah, yeah... definitely. That one has definitely been impressing me... Mars Volta—Our drummer is in love with Mars Volta. There have been a lot of really good albums that have come out, you know?

Alright, man, I've got one last question for ya. There are a lot of up and coming bands out there that would love to be in your position right now—being the newest signing of a really popular label like Fearless. First of all, has it hit you yet at all that you're signed to a label like Fearless?

No! It's still really crazy, we're still really stoked about it. We can't believe its happening. It's like we wake up and realize, "oh, we get to practice today" and we realize where we are and we're still so grateful and, you know, humble that it's even happening to us. To be on that Punk Goes 80's compilation with bands like Sugarcult, Midtown, and all these bands... it's just amazing.

That's gotta be awesome.

Yeah! We still can't believe any of it, man. It's crazy! The EP's gone up for pre-order and people are actually pre-ordering it! Its like, what the heck's going on?

Do you have any advice for all those unsigned bands out there?

All I have to say is just don't give up, you know? Work through those problems... I think there's some sort of ratio like 1 in 5 bands could make it and they break up because of stupid stuff. You just gotta work though it, you know? Just work hard, and you just gotta want it. You gotta have that drive; never give up, you know? Don't listen to what anyone says about "you're not good," "you're not this," "you're not that." Just do whatever you want if you want it.

Well, thanks for taking the time out to do this interview. I've listened to your stuff on MySpace, I think it's really good. I'll definitely be the first in line at the record store to pick up a copy and I can't wait to see you guys live.

Ah, thanks so much, man, it really means a lot.



Check out the breakthrough bands of this summer's Warped Tour

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a Change of Pace

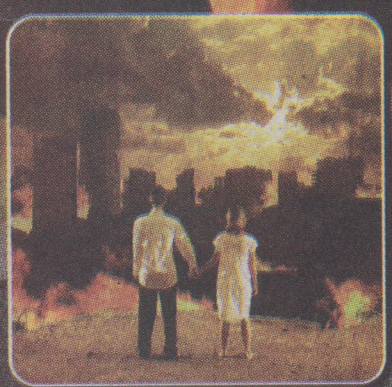
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J PAGE

Interview with Vocalist/Guitarist, Mike and Drummer, Sal

By Matt Cote / Photography By Jimmy Turri

J Page is a band that a lot of people have yet to hear of. But soon enough, you'll be hearing all about them. They're so good, there's only one way to describe them – think THE BEATLES meets THE ROLLING STONES. That's right – J PAGE has the talent and ability to become the greatest rock and roll band that has ever lived. Ok, that's not true at all. I just think that's a really fucking funny description from a punk rock band from Gainesville, Florida that the general public will never even know exists, and I think Mike would agree. So fuck that description. These guys have got that Gainesville kinda sound, but do it their own way, with an ample dose of energy and fun. Everyone here at AMP is truly psyched on this band. So go get yourself educated about the rock that is J PAGE – head over to MySpace, make them your friend. Download some music, or pop in this month's AMP sAMPler and listen to a track off their soon-to-be-released EP, "Goodbye Chapel Hill." But seriously, we hope you're as psyched about these guys as we are. They deserve your support, so get your asses out to see them when they're in your town. Buy them a beer, let them sleep on your floor, because they've got no money.

So what's the name J Page mean anyway?

Mike: It's the result of Floyd and I sitting in his room drunk, having no clue or care, really - what we wanted the name of the band to be. We had the songs written, and our first couple shows booked...but no name. So we were tossing stupid names back and forth, and I suggested we name the band after our friend, J. Page. We knew it would bother him, and thought it was funny. He's fairly well known around these parts...for, umm...being difficult, you could say. I described him as an asshole in another interview, and he wasn't so stoked about that. I personally think it's part of his charm. I meant asshole in a good way...but whatever. So, J, if you're reading this, rest assured that I didn't call you an asshole in this interview...asshole.

So you guys are outta Gainesville, the birthplace of just about every cool punk rock band ever. What's it like coming from a scene that is so supportive of local music?

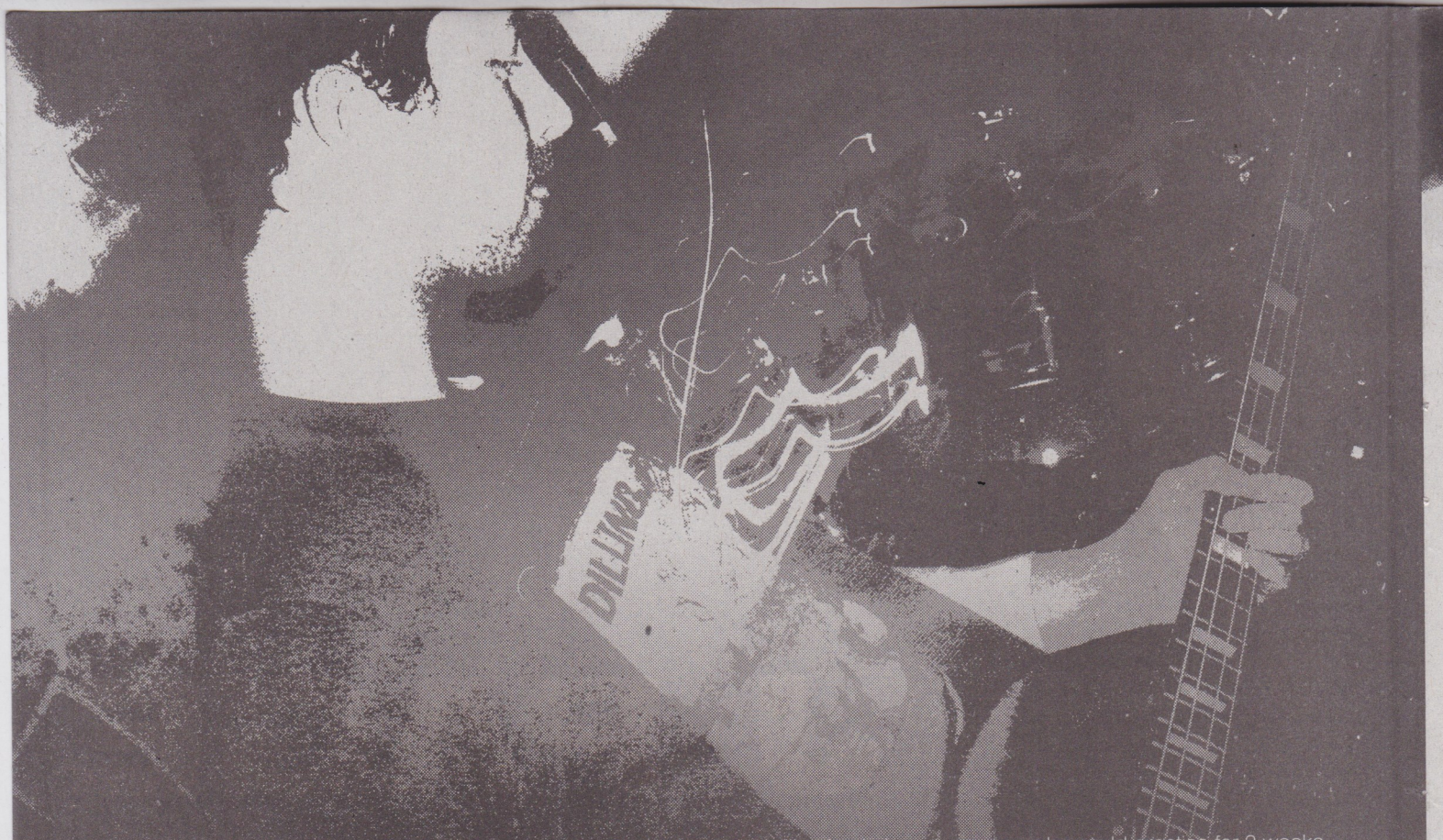
Sal: It's pretty good. I personally was born and raised in Gainesville, so I've seen its good points and bad points. But the music scene here is on an upward movement and is going to explode in the future years to come.

Mike: Every cool punk rock band ever???? I don't know about that, but I do love it here. It's kind of like a punk rock Never-Never Land...lots of 20 to 40 year old children playing in bands and hanging out, watching the 'real world' pass us by. It's funny, Sal is one of the few people I know who is actually from Gainesville. No one's really from Gainesville, people just seem to migrate from other places. I moved here from Chapel Hill, NC...which is very similar in many respects, but could be a bit too hip for my blood, from time to time. I haven't really seen much of that shit in Gainesville, which is refreshing, and it's just more punk rock friendly here...not to knock Chapel Hill, I miss it like crazy...but it was hard being in a punk rock band there.

How does being in a place like Gainesville influence the sound that you guys create?

Sal: Well to me, Gainesville just has this vibe to it. It's very hard to explain, you almost have to live here to get it. That vibe comes out in the music, and I think thats why a lot of Gainesville bands sound kind of similar.

You guys were all in bands previous to J



Page, quite a few of which were pretty well known within the scene. Who were some of your previous bands?
Mike: I was in THE SCARIES, from Chapel Hill, NC. We were around for about 7 years, released a bunch of records, played a bunch of shows, and had a lot of fun. We toured quite a bit with a band called GUNMOLL. I moved to Gainesville when THE SCARIES called it quits, to start a new band with Derron and Jon from GUNMOLL. It didn't work out because of some personal shit they were each going through at the time...but we're still great friends. Anyway, Troy was in BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT and Floyd was in AS FRIENDS RUST, which is probably the most well-known band any of us were in. They toured Europe a bunch, and put out records on some really well-known indie labels. Floyd was also in MOURNING AGAIN and CULTURE, 2 pretty big straight edge bands, which is hilarious if you know Floyd now. Floyd is our little star.
Sal: Well I was only in one real band that did something and it was called THE WATERSHIP DOWN. We were around for about 4 years and had several member changes after our singer/guitar player Rusty Fuller left the band to play drums in COPELAND. The music was much like 12 HOUR TURN, but a little heavier.

For people who are familiar with those bands, how would you compare the sound of the current band to that of some of your prior efforts?
Mike: I don't think J PAGE sounds anything like our previous bands. Obviously, it's easy for people to draw comparisons between us and our ex-bands...I sang, played guitar, and wrote the songs in THE SCARIES...and I sing, play guitar, and write songs in J PAGE. So no matter how much I think this band is different, there are still going to be small elements that are similar. I play guitar a certain way, and I sing a certain way, so it's not that odd for people to identify with what they're familiar with. Same goes with Floyd. We sound nothing like AS FRIENDS RUST, but we get compared to them. Why? Because Floyd played guitar and wrote songs with them, and he plays guitar and writes songs with us. It's no big deal, but I wish people would recognize the differences, instead of the similarities. We're a band, not the 4 separate parts of our old bands. With that being said, I know each of us has our own 'vision' of what we want the band to sound like, and when we bring that all together, it creates what we actually do sound like. I personally would love to sound something like a trainwreck between JAWBREAKER, LEATHERFACE, and SAMIAM...but that's just me, and we don't sound like that, and all of the other guys would say something different. So fuck it, I don't know. Listen to the EP and decide for yourself. I did not answer this question well.
Sal: For me J PAGE is totally new. I've never really played in a band this poppy, so it's good to have a change, but I think my style of drumming really adds to J PAGE in a good way. Coupled with the new songs, it's definitely made the band sound heavier.

So the EP is set to drop next month. It was originally schedule for release in April. What was the reason for the delay?
Mike: Well, our old drummer, Danny, decided that he couldn't be in a touring band anymore...2 weeks before we left for our last tour. We really didn't want to cancel the tour, so we scrounged to find anyone who could practice for 2 weeks straight, then drop their lives to go on a 3+ week tour. Real easy, right? Anyway, Sal was actually our first choice for that, but he couldn't do it on such short notice, so we kept looking and met this young kid, Jim Jam, who was willing and able to do the tour. It was his first tour ever. I'm not sure he really knew what it was like being in a touring band that nobody gives a shit about...but by the end, I think he got it. Anyway, we all knew this was only a temporary situation, and when we got home, we called Sal up again. We practiced with him once and knew he was the drummer for us. So, without making this long story even longer, I asked the label to push off the release date, since I knew we weren't going to be able to tour for the EP if it came out in April, being that we were breaking in a new drummer and all.

So now that you've found a new drummer, how's the touring schedule looking?
Mike: We're doing a bunch of stuff in the Southeast in August, then we're heading out west for almost all of September. I can't wait. If I sit at home for too long I start to feel stagnant and uninspired. Hopefully California will treat us well. I've had pretty bad luck out there in the past.

How important is touring to the band?
Mike: I think I can speak for us all when I say that touring is the most important part of our lives. It's what we live for. It's why we work our shitty jobs. It's why we spend weeks at a time on tour, barely making enough money to get from show to show, hoping that we get free drinks at the place we're playing, and hoping when we get home we'll be able to pay our rent. It's why



I spend hours every night on the computer and phone trying to get a hold of someone who cares enough to book our band in their town. And let me tell you, booking a tour is not fun. It's definitely the most frustrating part of playing in a band. I've never been on a tour that I didn't book myself, and the fact that every time we go on tour, I'm willing to throw myself into the three months of bullshit it takes to book 2 or 3 weeks worth of shows, must say something about how much I love to tour. Anybody who's ever booked a tour knows exactly what I'm talking about. I wish we made enough money to keep us on tour constantly, but as it stands right now, 3 weeks to a month at a time is all we can afford. And with gas prices as high as they are, it's made it even harder than it was just a few years ago. I envy all the kids out there who live with their parents and can go out on tour for endless amounts of time, I've never known that, but I really respect those parents for being so supportive of their kids.

Whets the worst part about being on the road?

Sal: Being on the road doesn't get bad until you run out of money and can't afford food. That, to me, is the worst part.

Mike: Who needs food? I'd say it's much worse when you can't afford beer, or when you're in one of those fucking States that doesn't sell beer on Sundays. Seriously though, I don't usually think anything on tour is all that bad. I guess the van breaking down really sucks, but usually leads to some funny stories, 'cause it seems like you never break down anywhere near civilization, where normal people live. It's always Deliverance land. If I had to name a worst part of tour, I suppose it would either be missing my son, or the drive home.

The EP is coming out on a small label out of Cincinnati, Nice Guy Records. How did you guys hook up with them, and how has the experience been thus far?

Mike: Well, originally, we talked to Var at No Idea, who releases a million records a year and was too busy to commit to anything. At the same time, I was talking to my good friend Ross Siegel, who released THE SCARIES last record on his label Law of Inertia Records, about releasing it, but he was too busy with the sale of Law of Inertia Magazine, so that was a no-go as well. When we started talking about other labels that we might want to work with, and I suggested Nice Guy Records. I knew Jamie at Nice Guy from when THE SCARIES had a song on a comp he released lots of years ago called 'Pop Punk Fever". I've always respected how he runs his label, and I'm stoked to be working with him. Though, we did call Fat and Epitaph, Mike and Brett still haven't returned our calls. Go figure...

Do you guys have material written as of now for a full-length?

Sal: We are currently working on new material and it is awesome! I personally love the direction the music is going.

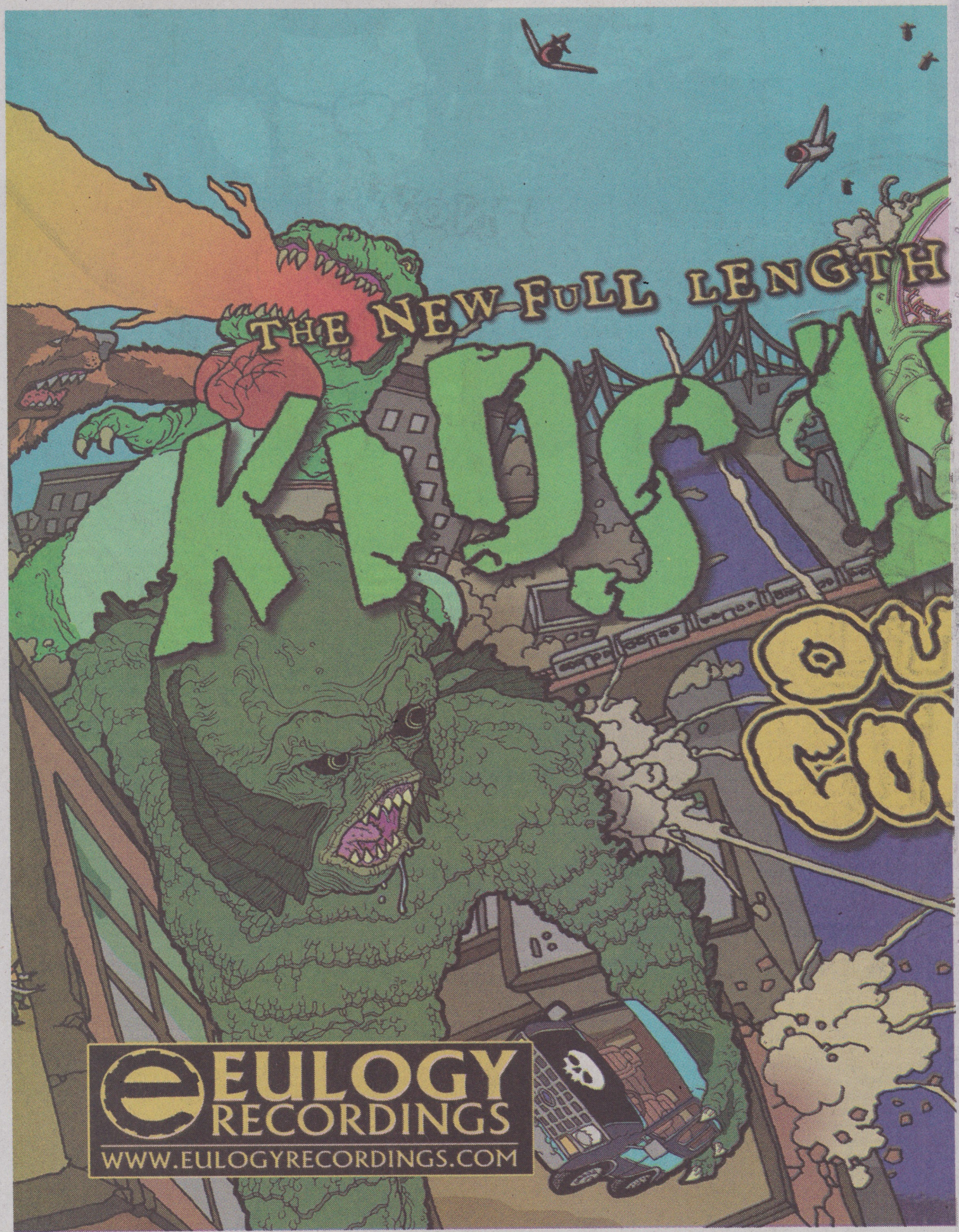
Mike: Between the songs the band knows and the 'shells' of songs we have waiting to get bashed out, we've easily got enough songs for a full length. We want to record more songs than will actually be released, so we can pick and choose, and try not to let any turds find their way onto our record. I'm really stoked on getting back into the studio. I feel like the band is finally taking shape and becoming something much more cohesive and unique. Don't get me wrong, we're not re-inventing the wheel or anything, and at the end of the day, we're still just a punk pop band, but the new songs are turning out way better than I ever could have imagined, and I can only hope they come across as well on tape as they do when we're playing them.

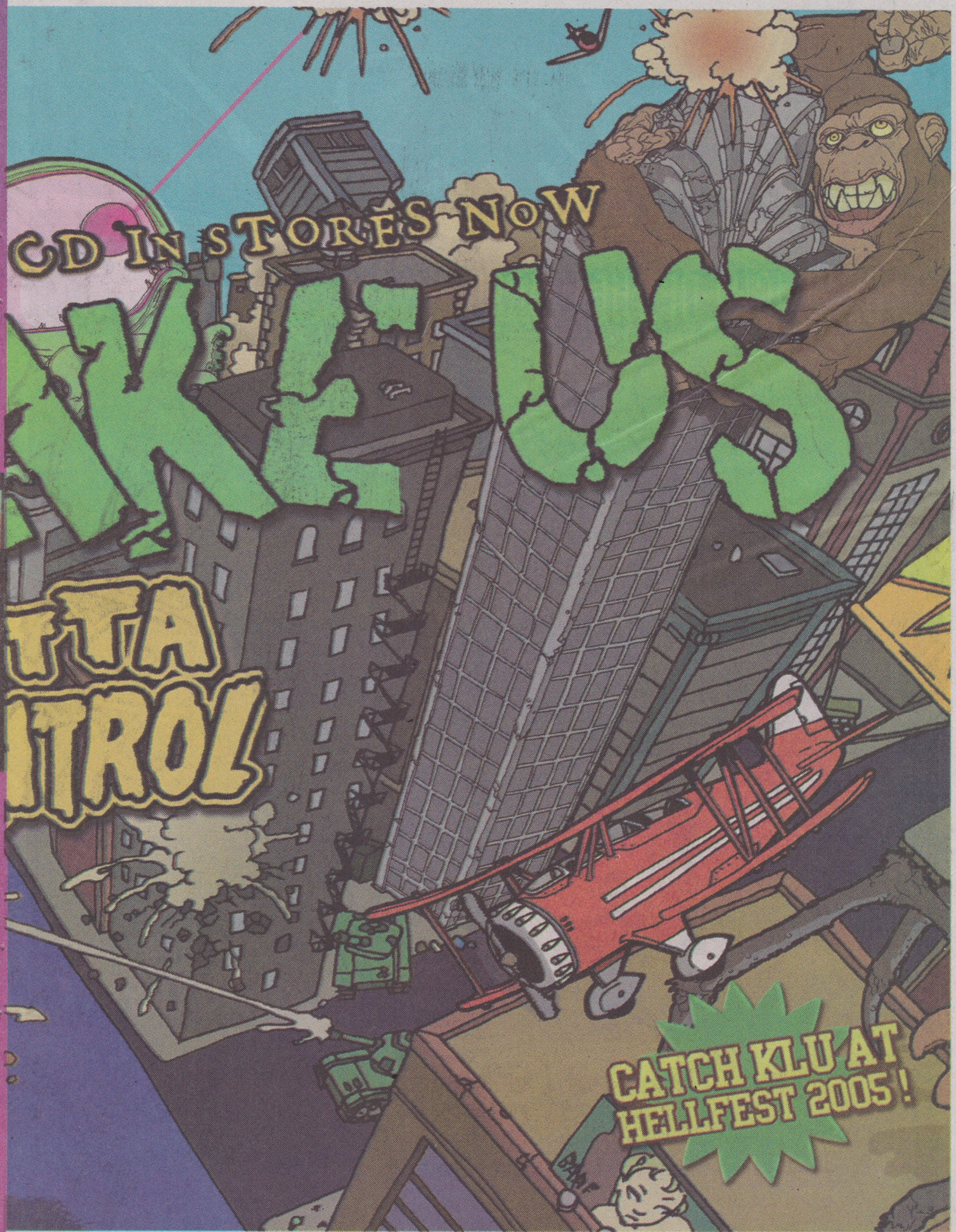
You had originally said you were hoping to be in the studio for a late 2005/early 2006 release date on a full length. Is that still on schedule, or did the delay of the EP push that back a bit?

Mike: Originally, that was the idea. But once again, with the loss of Danny, it set us back a bit. We'll probably do some demos this fall to send to interested labels, but no definite plans as of right now. The other factor here is going to be money...none of us have any. I paid for the recording of "Goodbye Chapel Hill" on my credit card, and we can't do that again. We'll be on tour almost all of September, and that will fuck us financially as well. But oh well, if I played music for money, I would have quit a long time ago. So, to answer your question...I have no idea when we'll record a full length, but we're working towards it as hard as we can.

So where should someone go if they want all the latest J. Page news?

Mike: We've got a website that we never update...www.jpagerock.beetlenation.com, but I probably fuck with our MySpace page more, so check out myspace.com/jpage. And Jamie definitely keeps his page current...www.niceguyrecords.com. Thanks Matt!


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FOLSOM

By Kirby Unrest

Give the readers the history of Folsom:
Our discography to date is 2002's "Soundtracks...", a 3 song demo, 2002's "Demonstration '02", a 5 song demo, 2004's FOLSOM/YOUR MISTAKE split on True Destiny Records, 2004's Full Length on WCWW, and most recently, 2005's "If You're a Viper" EP on Spook City Records.

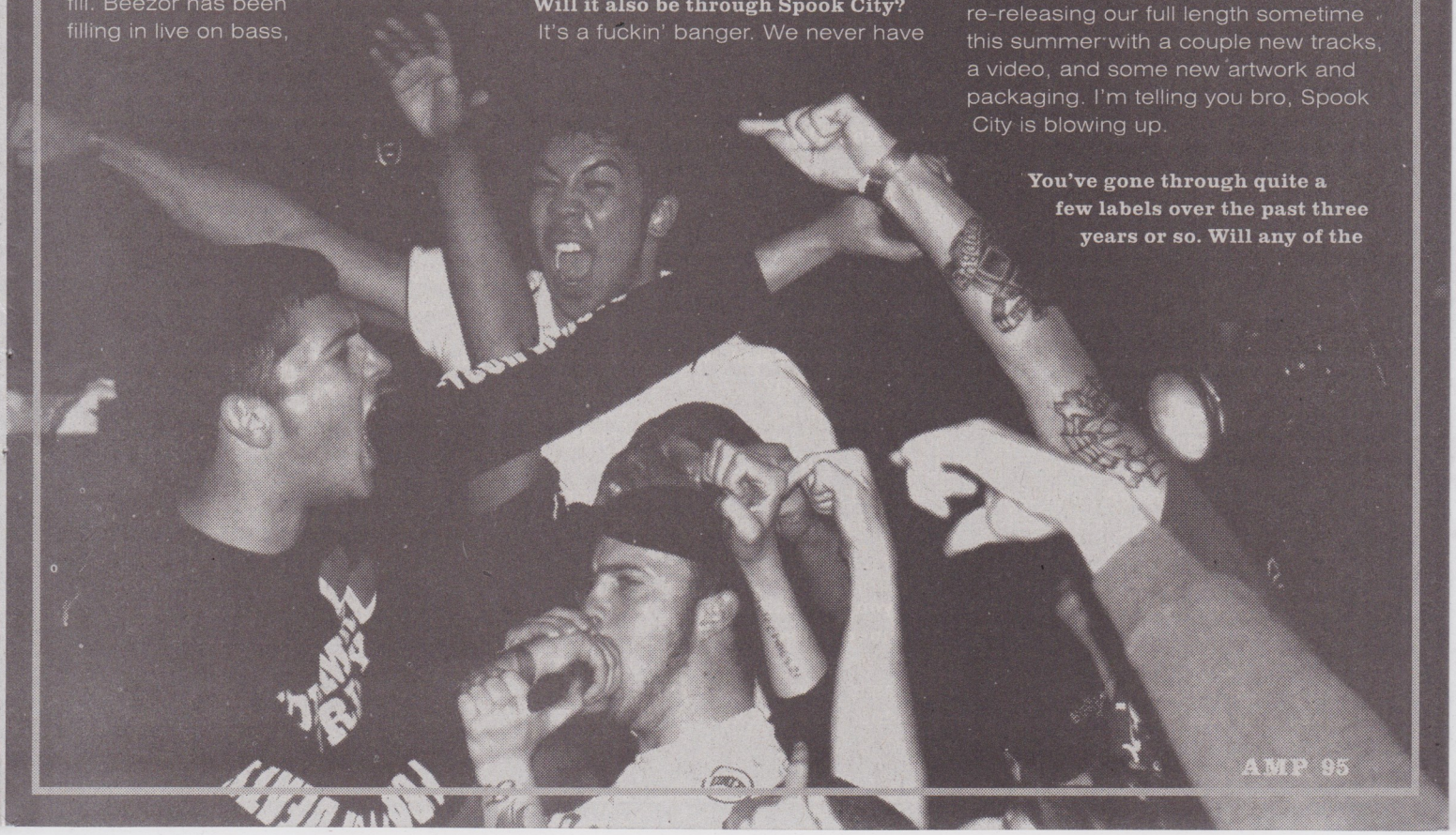
You had some line up changes recently. How has that affected the band?
Our bass player Craig quit last summer. It sucks, he's my fucking boy. We haven't found a permanent bass player yet. They have some big shoes to fill. Beezor has been filling in live on bass, and also recorded the bass parts on the "Viper" EP.

The band name comes from the infamous maximum security prison in California. Why did you choose it and how do you feel it fits the bands style?
Well, the name came from drinking 40's and rockin' some Johnny Cash. To tell you the truth, I don't give a fuck about prisons. I'm just tryin' not to end up in one. I just figured that you could do a hell of a lot worse than biting J.C. for a name.

You just dropped a new EP, "If You're A Viper" on Spook City Records. How do you feel it compares to your previous records, and when are you planning on releasing a full length? Will it also be through Spook City?
It's a fuckin' banger. We never have enough time, or money to record so I can't really complain about it. For the time and money spent I'm happy. As far as comparing it to the older material, you can tell it's a FOLSOM record. Good fast parts, really hard songs, and lyrics that make a little more sense than most of the shit that gets thru the door these days. I think everyone that became obsessed with the full length will jam the fuck out of the EP.

How have things been going with Shawn and Spook City?
Spook City is the shit. A real core label that gives a fuck about the bands they work with. What more do you want from an independent? Our EP is doing well, and we are planning on re-releasing our full length sometime this summer with a couple new tracks, a video, and some new artwork and packaging. I'm telling you bro, Spook City is blowing up.

You've gone through quite a few labels over the past three years or so. Will any of the



"I'm not embarrassed of what I sing about, so fuck it. I write songs for dudes that like pitting, stage divin' and a good sing along. I'm not into songs that are poetry put to metal. I like when someone says what they think, whether it's ignorant, offensive, whatever... just get some shit off your chest, brah."

material be re-released, especially your highly sought after debut, "The Soundtrack To Prison Riots Across America?"
Aside from our full length I haven't really thought about re-releasing the split, or the demo material. Maybe I'll just press some more of the "soundtrack..." demo and sell that shit on e-bay to Mikey Hood. Muahahaha...

The sound of FOLSOM has also experienced change throughout the course of your existence. You started off with more a straight to the point, beatdown metalcore vibe, complete with guttural vox. Then things got a little more punk, and your vocals became clearer. The lyrics also feel more philosophical, musings on daily life, almost like old country western tunes. Was this a change that just came naturally or did you make a conscious effort to alter the musical/lyrical output of FOLSOM?
It was a conscious effort for sure on the vocals, but we've always had punk sounding songs even on our first demo (Mootersan). I want to make records that motherfuckers jam. And singing hard, like I was doing is very hard on my throat. I'm not embarrassed of what I sing about, so fuck it. I write songs for dudes that like pitting, stage divin' and a good sing along. I'm not into songs that are poetry put to metal. I like when someone says what they think, whether it's ignorant, offensive, whatever... just get some shit off your chest, brah. It's hardcore, it's supposed to be creative man. I'm at the end of my wits with half the shit that gets in.

Speaking of the country western influence, you even wrote music for a song called "Mandatory Merle" which contains the lyrics of Merle Haggard. I thought it was pretty awesome and very original. What do you dig about Merle?
What is there not to dig about Merle? If you want some honest, heartfelt, honky tonk no one does the shit better than Merle.

In "Another Day In Sin City," you talk about the "water is shut off because we are at war, with the yard of thieves and wolves who live next door?" What exactly is this about?
Beef. Grown ass beef, with some rich, powerful men that have been trying to bend us over for years. I can't really go into details, but this shit is the reason why I don't give a fuck about all the kids running around saying I have beef with other HC kids. I've got some real ugly problems in my life. I don't have time for little shit talking scenesters dropping my name.

What does the title "If You're A Viper" mean?
Wayne "the train" Hancock did a cover of "Viper" a few years ago, and Folsom wore that record out on tour. That song has just become a part of who we are.

For the uninformed, what is HLC and who is involved?
Hammer Lane Crew. We own a junkyard on Hammer Lane in North Las Vegas. It started out just dudes that had lived there, but now it's pretty much anybody that reps FOLSOM/ LVHC.

Are you guys still running your Hammer House venue?
Yeah. It will never die. But right now Vegas is blowing up, so it's not so vital that we book shows. When we built that shit and started doing shows, it was because it was the only way that kids were going to see the DEATH THREATs, and TERRORs, and INTEGRITYs play Vegas. Now though, we've turned the core into a legitimate scene. Its not just a handful of diehard dudes anymore. We have venues that can accommodate any size core band.

What is the scene like in Vegas right now?
Amazing. The new crop of bands are so fucking good. Check out MISERICORDIAM, BOMBS AWAY, OF FAITH AND FIRE, ENDS WITH US, and the mighty PULL THE PIN. A lot of great bands.

Speaking of Sin City, who is the greatest card shark/slot jockey in the band and what member(s) can drink any challengers under the table?
I think this whole band can hold their own with anyone. Bring that shit.

Strip joint everyone should visit in Vegas:
Spearmint Rhino.

Best boxing match you've seen, in or outside of the ring:
I just watched Barrera vs. Morales I again. Great fight.

Favorite casino, on or off the strip:
Mandalay Bay is hard to beat. They get a lot of great MMA fights.

Finest eats/watering hole:
Roberto's taco shops!

What is your favorite song to play live?
"Beezor Blues" is always fucking insane. "Piss Up A Rope" brings out the worst in people on the dance floor. "Hammer House" is up there, too.

Where can people get in touch with you/check out your tracks?
Our website is still being built folsomhlc.com, and you can buy our new record from spookcityusa.com

Shout outs: LVHC, IN THE CROSSHAIRS from Denver, WILL TO LIVE, HOODS, LIFE OR DEATH, SKARE TACTIC, DIE YOUNG, PRIDE KILLS, EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF, CLENCHED FIST, REVENGE THERAPY, VENDETTA, Spook City and the beautiful Jennifer Marie Olsen.

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"Music is the best friend you can ever have. It'll never steal your girlfriend, never steal your money or your car and it's always there for you whenever you're in need." **- Will Franco of Aiden**

By Don Sill

This summer Victory Records Presents "New Faces From Different Places," a tour designed to bring new music and new bands to the doorsteps of rock fans everywhere. Scheduled to run from coast to coast this Summer,"New Faces From Different Places" features four up and coming Victory bands who vow to bring the scene closer together by delivering a diverse hardcore/punk sound into your eardrums. THE HURT PROCESS, along with AIDEN; THE AUDITION and THE JUNIOR VARSITY are ready to take the stage and rock your faces off. "We're super stoked to be touring with these bands," raved Will Franco of the Seattle-based screamo-band, AIDEN. "I can't wait to get out there and play for all these kids every night."

Playing night after night is nothing new for AIDEN who have been blowing up in Seattle and selling out local clubs, including the famed El Corazon, by themselves. The band are also expected to drop their Victory debut, NIGHTMARE ANATOMY debuting this fall, Not too shabby for a band in which two members are JUST graduating from high school.

Although AIDEN may have the youngest members it is Chicago's THE AUDITION, who are the green-horns of the bunch. "This is one our first big tour," says Ryan O'Connor, drummer for pop-punkers, THE AUDITION, whose Victory debut, Controversy Loves Company, is set for release this fall.

"Kids haven't heard too much from us yet, so we're look forward to getting out there, that's for sure."

Young or old, green-horn or veteran, one thing remains clear- all the bands on this tour are gunning to put themselves smack dab on the punk-rock map. "We're real excited about this tour," gushed vocalist, Dan Lawerence of THE HURT PROCESS. The U.K. band has been working on breaking into the states within the past few years and their latest release off Victory, A Heartbeat Behind came out this past May. "We've only toured the states once and that was only the West Coast. To be honest, we really don't know what to expect because we've never really done a club tour like this. This will be new territory for us."

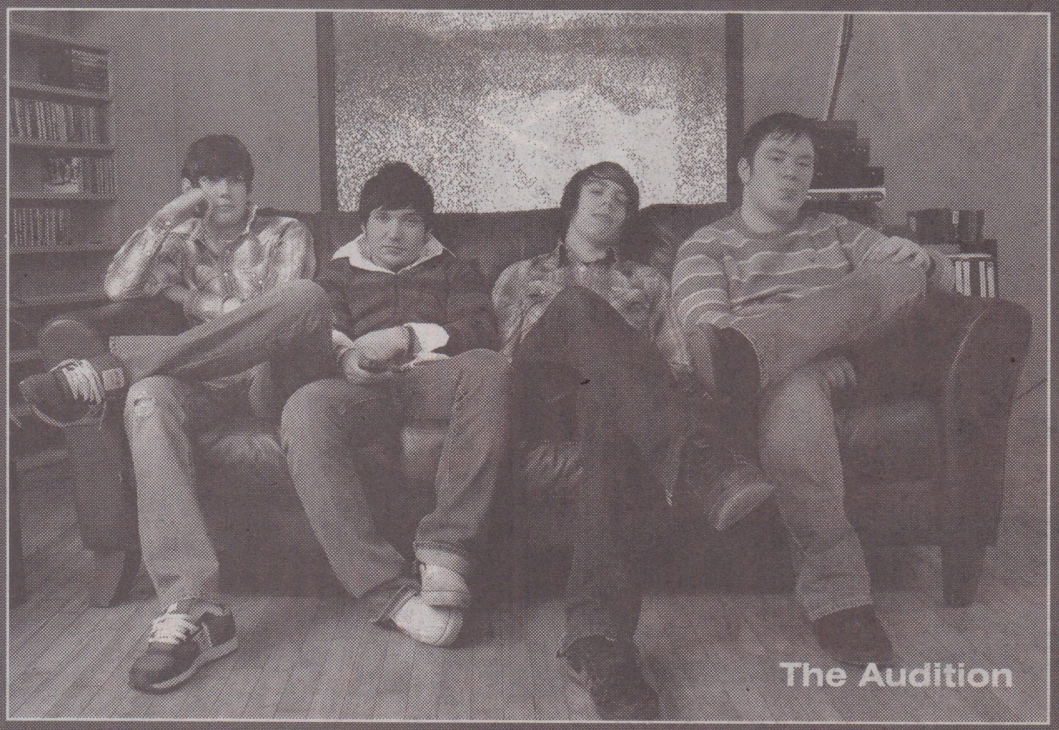
This will be new territory for all the bands on this bill. In fact for some this will be their first tour ever. "We are practicing a lot," admits



The Hurt Process



The Junior Varsity



The Audition

O'Connor, "We're making sure that we can re-create the record as good as possible so kids can expect a good live show and a lot of rockin' out."

Andy Wildrik, guitarist for the Illinois-based prog-punkers, THE JUNIOR VARSITY agrees, "We've all been waiting for that one big tour to go out on and going into this we know that we have a lot to prove."

Wildrik and THE JUNIOR VARSITY got the tour they wished for and are ready to capitalize on it and prove their worth. "This is a great opportunity for us and it means a lot," said Wildrik whose Victory debut, Wide Eyed, dropped on July 12. "We've been working so damn hard in the studio. We're just getting all the songs put together and just drilling ourselves so much that our live show is just sounding more fine-tuned and tight.

"This could be one of those tours that could actually boost our level at this point," continued Wildrik. "Anything else would be cool, but a tour like this could be very beneficial to every band on this tour right now."

"New Faces from Different Places" will also be beneficial to the fans of hardcore/ punk rock music for it gives connoisseurs an opportunity to check out the latest bands coming up from the Victory camp. "This works out for Victory, too," Wildrik explained, "to have four of their bands going out and kicking ass every night...man, kids will see that Victory bands do rock after all."

Booked mainly as a club tour the bands will cover such American cities as Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, Atlanta and New Jersey. "I think it will be a pretty good tour," modestly said O'Connor, "we have a bunch of great bands with us and I just hope that all the shows sell out. This is a great way for kids to get a really good first glance at us.

"We really believe in what we have. Victory is a really good label, we love the people there and we all feel like we're in a good position right now. We're just really pumped about all this and just psyched to get out there."

Fans are psyched as well as the bands are preparing to bring the ruckus to a city near them. "We're really excited about it, it should be good fun," Lawerence gushed. "We're looking forward to making as many fans in the states as possible."

Lawerence of the hardcore/ screamo outfit, THE HURT PROCESS, agrees. "I just want these kids to walk away knowing that they just saw a band go out and play their hardest and hopefully they enjoyed the show. We're not just coming out here to the states to play once, you know, we want to come to the states and conquer, we want to earn a fan base there and do what Robbie Williams couldn't [Laughs]. We're quite savage live. We're a lot heavier live then we are on record...people better bring their ear-plugs [Laughs]."

Music, "it's always there for you," and music will be right there to serve you all summer long on the "New Faces From Different Places Tour". "We're gonna bring the rock," raved Franco, "We're just gonna go out and destroy...we're gonna destroy the country One thing I promise is that we're gonna rock everyone's face off."

To find out when the "New Faces From Different Places Tour" will reach your area log to - www.victoryrecords.com


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FINCH

An Interview with Guitarist Randy Strohmeyer

By Mark G. Miller

Following the largely successful debut of What It Is To Burn, over Two years of relentless touring and another long year in the studio writing and recording their sophomore effort, Finch is back with a new release Say Hello To Sunshine. But don't let the title fool you, this once green quintet of Nate Barcalow on vocals, Alex Linares and Randy Strohmyere on guitars, bassist Derek Doherty and newcomer Marc Allen on drums have collectively come of age. They are determined to set Finch apart from the emo, screamo, pop punk, flavor of the month rank and file bands saturating the music scene today. They are focused on being true to themselves and have taken the time to craft "something different" while attempting to break the mold of a musical genre they helped create. After stepping off stage from the sold out show at the Roxy on Hollywood's Sunset Strip I met with Randy Strohmeyre (also known as R2K to the Finch faithful). Obviously distracted and still pumped with adrenaline he took the time to answer questions and speak about the new record, new drummer, summer tour plan and much more.

Good to see Finch playing live again, tonight is the first show kicking off your U.S. tour, how'd it feel to be back out there?
YEAH! A little rusty.

The crowd seemed to get into the new material.
Yeah well, you saw it, but we'll really see what its like after the record comes out.

The band has gone through some changes since coming off the road; one in particular has been the addition of your new drummer. What can you tell me about Marc Allen?
The thing is its weird, our drummer Marc was with another band named COUNTERFIT and they were basically one of my favorite bands. I always loved the way he drummed, thought he had great rhythm. I always wished that we could play with him some how. Our old drummer leaving and us getting Marc has been a real positive thing for our band.

Bringing in new people to a band can often affect the chemistry and sound, what kind of influence has Marc had on the new record?
Oh, He's had a huge influence. He actually wrote stuff that's on the new record. The old drummer Alex (Pappas) never wrote anything, we gave him writing credits and shit, but he never wrote anything because he didn't know how to play anything else. Marc knows how to play chords, knows how to sing, he knows how to play guitar better than me. He fuckin' rules man! Basically, He's the best thing that could have happened to our band overall.

Sounds like a well-rounded musician?
And a great person too. We're really lucky to have him in our band.

I learned that you used more than one drummer during the recording sessions for the new album.
Yeah, We actually tried drumming with our friend Chris Tsagakis from The RX BANDITS, but we didn't actually use any of those songs on the record. They didn't come out very...those songs didn't match the sound of the rest of the record. It would have been nice but maybe we'll use those songs for some B-sides, who knows? But playing drums on the record, its all Marc.

You spent the better part of a year working on the new disc, what is the writing process like?
Well someone will come up with a riff during practice then we just start jamming on it. We'll all throw out ideas and try different thing, come up with a bunch of off hand stuff to try to find what works best. Sometimes it takes a really long time. We could take months to finish a song but when it's done, it's like really rewarding, you know? It's Like FUCK YEAH!

What about lyrics?
Nate writes every single lyric, he's always done that. That's pretty much how it works.

For a band that spends as much time touring as Finch is known to, how come you don't write more on the road?
It's pretty hard to write on he road, I think we've only written one song on the road?

What song was that? Does it appear on the new record?
Yeah, Its called 'Bite Marks and Blood Stains', it's going to be the first single off the new record. We just shot the video for it yesterday actually. We wrote it in England whole touring for What It Is To Burn. I really don't know how to describe the song itself. It's a little slower in the timing and a little moody. Other than that one we've never written on the road.

What can we expect from the music on the new record? The title Say Hello To Sunshine suggests something a little more light and happy?
The music is definitely darker, but the title is more tongue and cheek, kind of like a joke. The way I see the music it's mainly something that only I might get, something for no one else but it's like a dark comedy. Its kind of depressing but wacky at the same time, you know? It's fuckin weird, but that's what I like about it too.

During the past year and half Finch has played some one off shows around the Los Angeles and San Diego area. Do you use these shows as opportunities to work the kinks out of new songs?
No, we pretty much do that in practice. It's more of like we just love playing live shows and do our thing. Its good to get out there and if we haven't done it in a while it's refreshing to go back and do what we love.

What do like most about playing live?
I just like to play my guitar as well as I can.

Do you have a favorite place to play live, City or venue?
Probably, I don't know, I like playing everywhere. Anywhere there is good sound, yeah, its always fun. I don't even care if there is a crowd. I don't mind I even like playing in my bedroom so I'm like whatever. I don't know if I'm a good musician? (Laughs) I just like playing, its so fun. I'm pretty lucky to be able to do what I do.

Are you going to be playing any of the big festivals while touring this summer?
Yeah, Playing the festivals over in Europe its pretty exciting because the kids over there really get music, you know what I mean? They just love it. The Download Festival in England just got booked and I think we're trying to get on the Reading/ Leeds Fest too.

What about here in the states?
As far as America, we're definitely going to tour the US this summer for our new record but as far as festivals I don't know, we'll see, nothings booked yet.

Doing any dates on the Warped tour?
We'll never do the Vans thing again, I don't think. They're not really cool; it's not the right way to see bands, I don't think. It's cool for some bands, but its kind of like going to Costco or Sam's Club or something and that's cool, but it's just not for us.

Who are some of the bands your into right now?
NURSES, I really like BLOC PARTY a lot lately, they're fucking awesome. My favorite bands are like PIN BACK and RADIOHEAD. Yeah, I love those bands.

Of the bands you mentioned, did any of their influence show up on the new record?
Um yeah, for me I think RADIOHEAD was an influence and um I'm influenced by a lot of movies, too.

Movies?
Like movie soundtracks and stuff.

That's interesting, what type of movies?
Mostly like Danny Elfman scores, the Tim Burton movies. Edward Scissor Hands, Pee Wee's Big Adventure, Those types of movies. I also like OK Computer from RADIOHEAD.

Finch is known as a band with an aggressive guitar style. In your opinion, who are some influential and innovative guitarists in music right now?
Johnny Ramos from RADIOHEAD and I think Omar from THE MARS VOLTA rips, but I wouldn't say they have an effect on my playing.

So who are your inspirations and influences?
When I first started playing, I think I was influenced by Jimi Hendrix a lot. In my first band with my neighborhood friends we played all pretty much BEATLES and SANTANA songs and stuff. We must have played like 10 shows, it was pretty cool. We played community talent shows and shit. (laughs)

A lot of bands note 80's metal bands as their influences, but it sounds like yours go pretty far back?
Yeah I think so. My parents bought me my first guitar and my dad showed me Jimi Hendrix, LED ZEPPELIN, SANTANA and all that. I kinda got into playing from there. Although I don't really listen to those bands that much anymore, I get into LED ZEPPELIN every now and then, I probably should more because they so like had a huge impact on me.

Finch is a band that has a special bond with their fans. How would you describe the relationship between you and the fans?
I don't really separate us, you know? I just think that we're all people and we're all into music. That's why we're all here. The only thing that really separates us is the fact that we're on stage and they are not. We're all down for the same shit for the most part, you know what I mean? We hang out with them, they hang out with us. It's cool.

Well that's why you got into playing music in the first place, because you were a fan.
Yeah totally! I worshipped bands and wished I could be them, but I don't see that there has to be any separation of fans and bands. I'm down with hanging out and just shooting the shit with people, you know?

With an EP and a successful full length disc already under your belt and your new record soon to be released, what advise do you have for the up and coming rockers, the kids who might look up to you as an inspiration for their playing and music careers?
Fuck! Just be as original as you can. I know it's hard to get away from your influences and stuff. For me obviously when I was a bit younger it was pretty apparent who I was into, even as a little kid, you know? But one day its going to click, its going to click and you just think, "I have to do something different, I have to do something that's going to matter." Then just go out there and do it and spend as much time as you can on it. Because if your not doing something new then your just doing reruns and no one wants to see a fuckin rerun over and over again, you know what I mean? Do something new and great, do something that's going to be classic, inspire to be classic I think.

Something that's going to last.
YEAH!

Take bits and pieces of your influences but...
But push it forward, do something different, something that matters, Make a point and DO IT. I don't know, I'm not saying that we have, but we're definitely making a huge effort. That's why we spent three years on this new record. We want it to be fucking something different, something that's not necessarily easy to grasp, and something that's going to take time. We want it to be classic and like... FUCK! I can't think of the right words... we just want it to last for a long time. I'm kind of rambling because it's hard for me to explain it.

Although having some trouble putting his thoughts into words, when talking to Randy it becomes obvious that he's a genuine character, More concerned about having his band make a musical contribution that is strong, lasting and meaningful to their fans, friends, peers as well as themselves.
Finch will be on tour all summer and beyond supporting their new record 'Say Hello To Sunshine.' ↖



Tech Talk
WITH KURT BALLOU

He won't solve your love quandaries, but CONVERGE's Kurt Ballou will answer your questions on all things related to rocking the fuck out.

What might be wrong if I can't get my guitar to tune? One of my friends said the intuition might be messed up, but I dunno how to do that so, uhh yeah...What do you think and if you agree with him how do I fix that? Thanks.
—Kyle, Montgomery, NY

Tuning, especially in the studio, can be a nightmare. Changes in climate can send a perfectly intonated guitar completely out of whack. Also, any changes you make to string gauge or what you tune to will affect it as well. Here's nine steps to get your guitar to tune up its best.

#1. Pick a brand of string and a gauge and stick with it. I use D'Addario "Heavy" gauge strings and they work out great for me. I've found that heavier string gauges have better intonation as well as better tone. Find what works well for you.

#2. Decide on a tuning (e.g. E, D, C, drop D, drop C, etc.)

#3. Check your truss rod. To do this, press down on the first fret of the low E string with one hand, and press down on the last fret with the other hand. Then look at how much space there is between the string and the frets at the middle of the neck. This is a measure of how much "relief" there is in the neck. There should be about enough space to slide a pick between the string and a fret. If there is a large gap, or the string is bottoming out, the truss rod needs to be adjusted.

#4. Adjust the truss rod. Strings naturally want to bow the neck up, so the truss rod was invented to compensate. Therefore, if there is too much bow (a large gap between strings and frets when fretting the first and last fret), then you need to tighten the truss rod. If there is not enough gap, then you need to loosen the truss rod. It's a good idea to not turn the truss rod more than 1/4 turn at a time. Give it at least half an hour to settle in before you check if you've made enough or too much adjustment. Truss rods are very sensitive so be careful.

#5. Set your action. Get the height of your string saddles set the way you like them now that the neck has been adjusted. Look at the strings from the side to make sure they are at similar heights.

#6. Check the intonation. To do this, use the most accurate tuner you have. Hit a 12th fret harmonic on the 1st string and then compare that to a fretted 12th fret note. Try to fret as hard as you would when playing the guitar. Fretting harder will cause the guitar to be more sharp. This problem is worse on guitars with jumbo frets. I've found that most guitar techs don't fret hard enough, therefore their intonation jobs are lousy. Anyway, what you want to do is compare the 12th fret natural harmonic to the 12th fret fretted note. Hitting the harmonic will perfectly divide the string in half, creating an octave of the fundamental note. The 12th fret fretted note should also do the same, but it is subject to the position of the saddle. Adjust the saddle so that the two are exactly the same pitch. Retune and check both notes between each saddle adjustment. Repeat this for every string.

#7. Lubricate your nut. Gibsons in particular are notorious for their G-string problems. If you put a little Chap Stick or pencil lead in the nut before putting on strings, it can help the string from sticking at the nut and causing tuning problems.

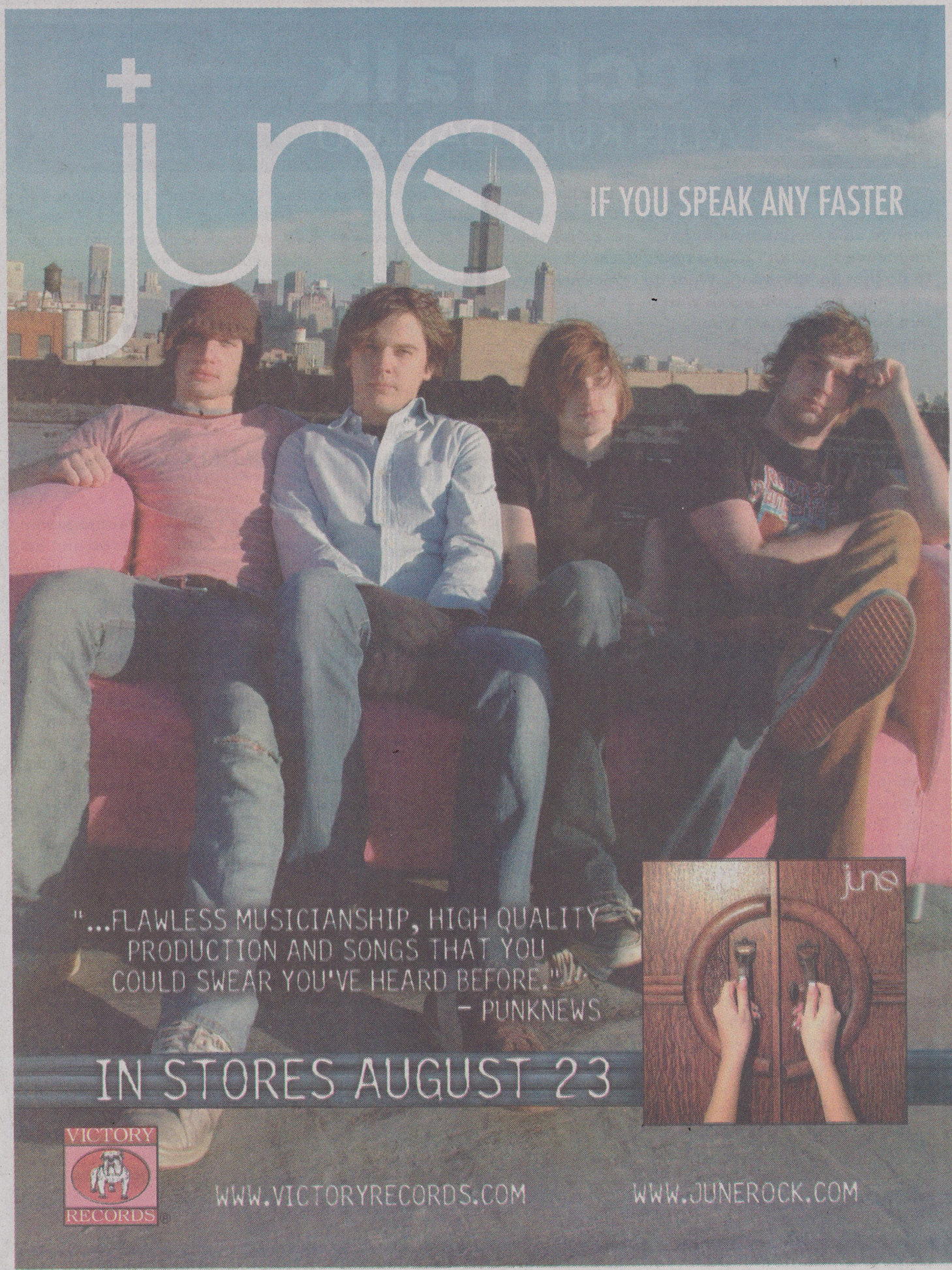
#8. When tuning, always tune below the pitch and back up. There is slack in the gears of the tuning pegs and you must tune up, not down, to have proper tension on them. It's also a good idea to stretch out the strings as you are tuning.

#9. While you're plugged into a tuner, pluck some open notes and some fretted notes all around the guitar. Watch how much how hard you pick and how hard you fret affects the pitch. You can either adjust your tuning or your playing to compensate. I've noticed that on detuned guitars, and particularly detuned basses, you almost have to tune them 10 cents flat since they bend so sharp when being picked.

I got this beginner electric guitar set in Sep. 2004 for $150 and so the guitar's a beginner. I'm going to go to a rock camp in our city and I was wondering if you think it'd be worth it for me to get a better guitar? I know I can't get it this year, but maybe next year. The guitar is a fender-squire, 21 frets, and 5 pickups. I've been playing since the day I got it and I really wanna take this seriously and not have it be just a hobby. Do u think it's worth it and if it is, what type should I get?
—No Name

As long as it's not horribly uncomfortable to play, I'd stick with the one you've got. Sometimes it's actually better to learn on a bad instrument because you have to try harder to get it to do what you want. If you've got a few extra bucks, it's probably worth getting a better bridge pickup and a setup from a good guitar tech. If you've got any money left over after that, put that towards a good tube amp.

Got a question for Kurt? E-mail him at kurt@ampmagazine.com


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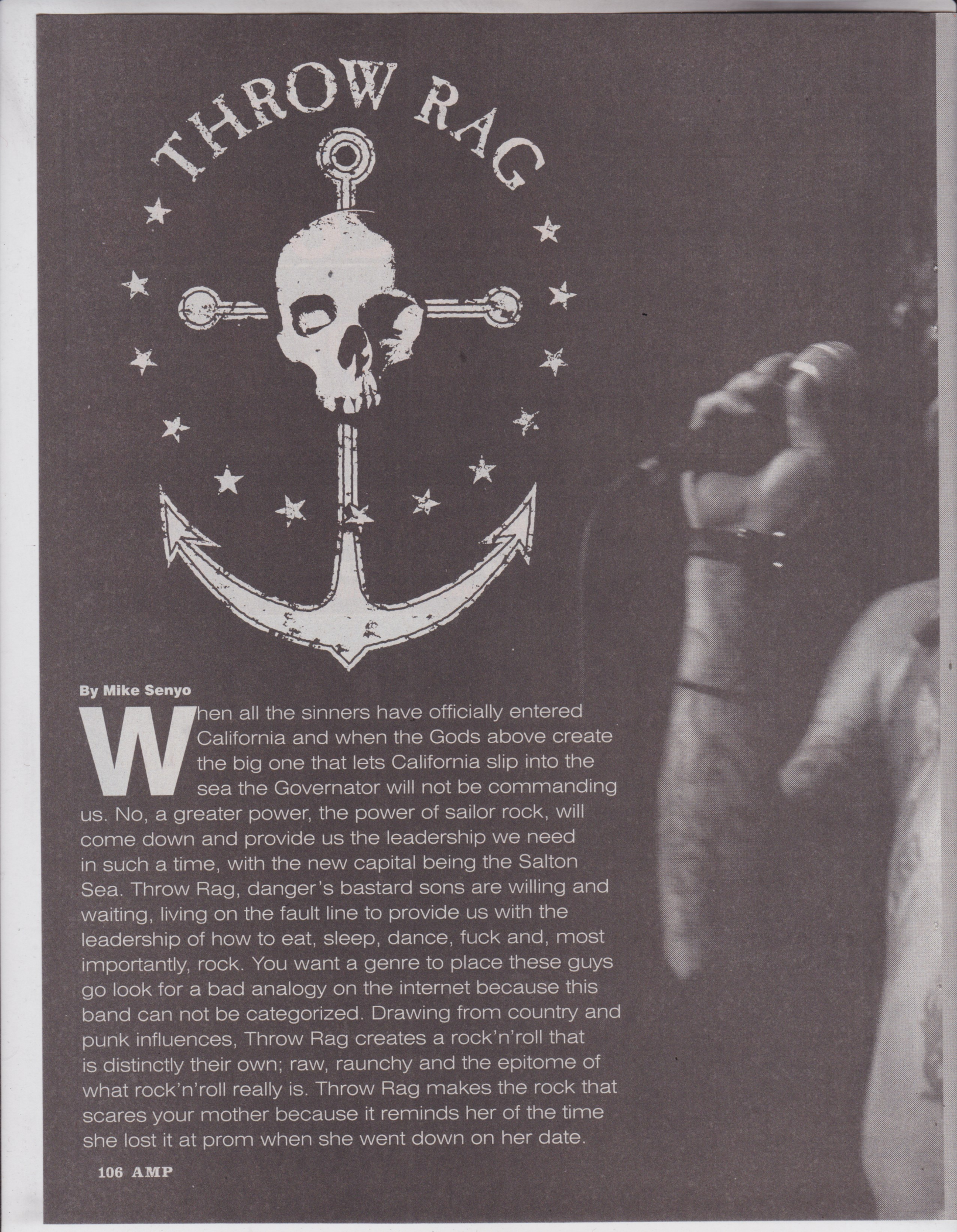
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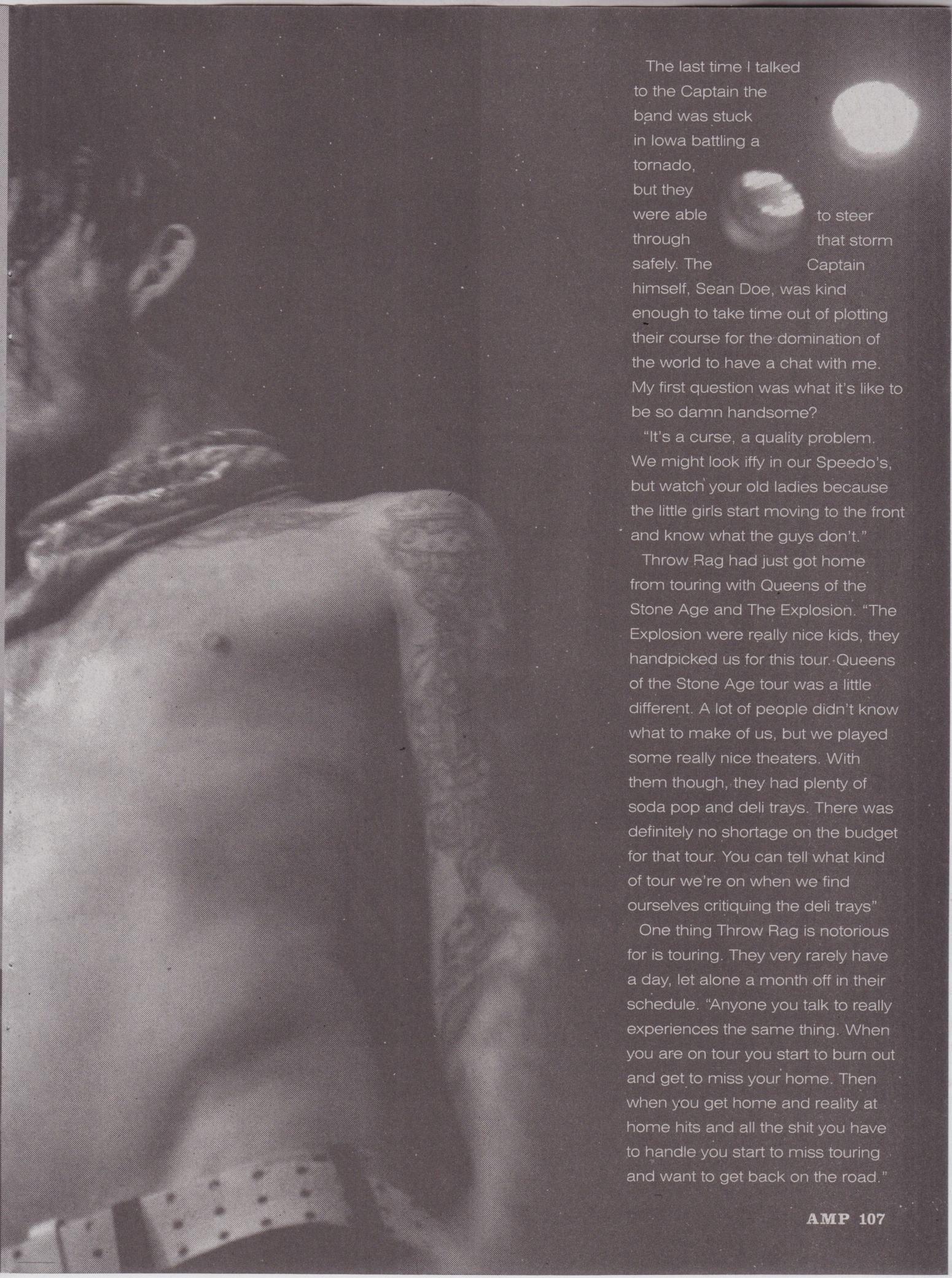
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THROW RAG



By Mike Senyo

When all the sinners have officially entered California and when the Gods above create the big one that lets California slip into the sea the Governator will not be commanding us. No, a greater power, the power of sailor rock, will come down and provide us the leadership we need in such a time, with the new capital being the Salton Sea. Throw Rag, danger's bastard sons are willing and waiting, living on the fault line to provide us with the leadership of how to eat, sleep, dance, fuck and, most importantly, rock. You want a genre to place these guys go look for a bad analogy on the internet because this band can not be categorized. Drawing from country and punk influences, Throw Rag creates a rock'n'roll that is distinctly their own; raw, raunchy and the epitome of what rock'n'roll really is. Throw Rag makes the rock that scares your mother because it reminds her of the time she lost it at prom when she went down on her date.

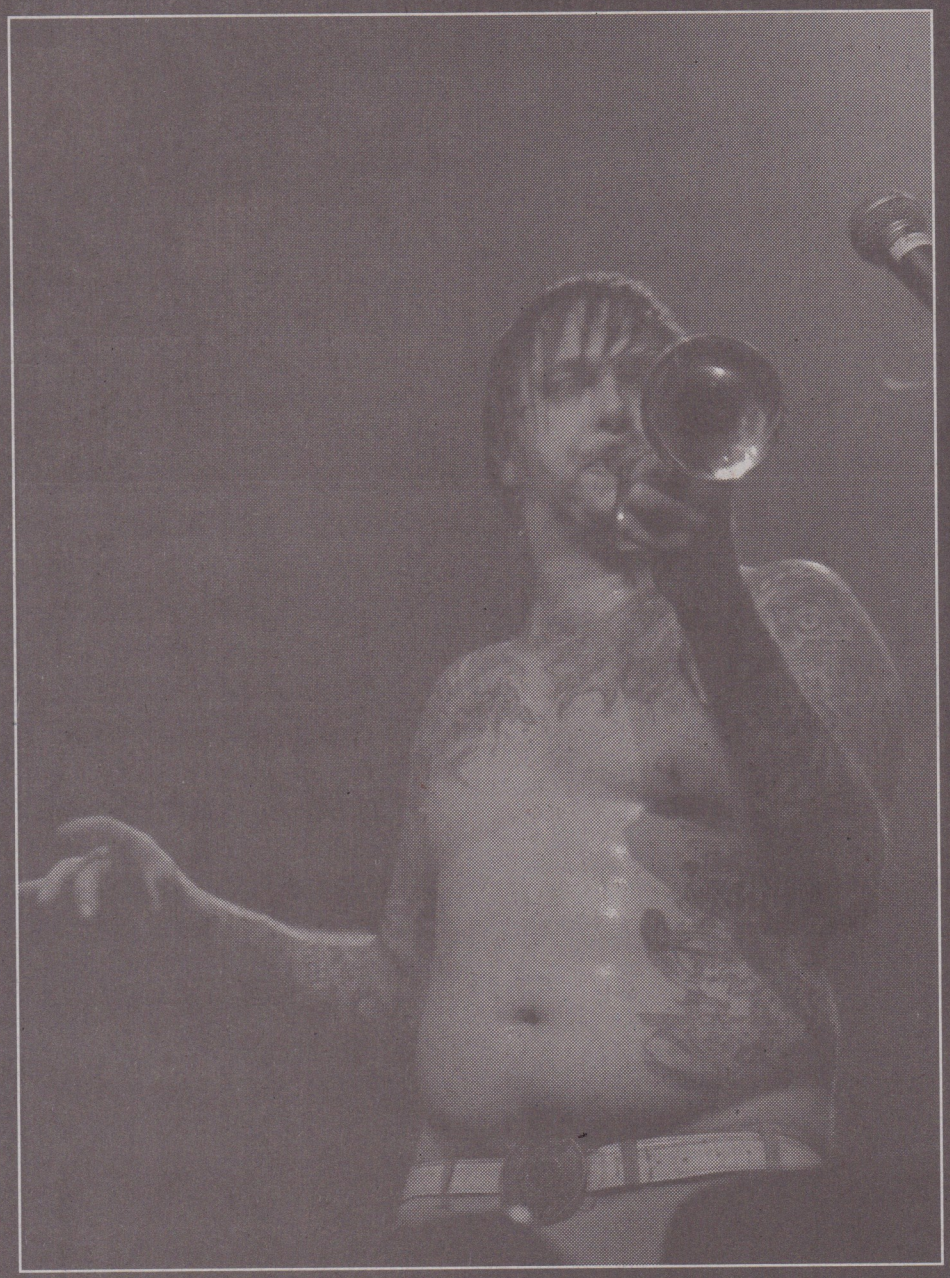


The last time I talked to the Captain the band was stuck in Iowa battling a tornado, but they were able to steer through that storm safely. The Captain himself, Sean Doe, was kind enough to take time out of plotting their course for the domination of the world to have a chat with me. My first question was what it's like to be so damn handsome?

"It's a curse, a quality problem. We might look iffy in our Speedo's, but watch your old ladies because the little girls start moving to the front and know what the guys don't."

Throw Rag had just got home from touring with Queens of the Stone Age and The Explosion. "The Explosion were really nice kids, they handpicked us for this tour. Queens of the Stone Age tour was a little different. A lot of people didn't know what to make of us, but we played some really nice theaters. With them though, they had plenty of soda pop and deli trays. There was definitely no shortage on the budget for that tour. You can tell what kind of tour we're on when we find ourselves critiquing the deli trays"

One thing Throw Rag is notorious for is touring. They very rarely have a day, let alone a month off in their schedule. "Anyone you talk to really experiences the same thing. When you are on tour you start to burn out and get to miss your home. Then when you get home and reality at home hits and all the shit you have to handle you start to miss touring and want to get back on the road."



King Taco Pearl, the band's second guitar player recently left the band. I asked the Captain how was the transition of switching from two guitar players to one.

"You want to talk about touring and burning out, King Taco Pearl, Master of All Time and Space, that's the reason he left. The road was just taking a toll on him. His last show was New Years, it was a mutual thing, and he left on good terms. We just went on tour after he left and it was shocking at first. Rolling with one guitar sounded a little different at first." The band plans to stick with one guitar for now and doesn't plan on filling in the void King Taco Pearl left behind.

Throw Rag's third album, its second on BYO Records, hit stores on June 21. 13 Feet and Rising is an album essential to your summer collection. Throw Rag brings a more polished sound while working with Cameron Webb of Social Distortion and Motorhead fame. "It's more polished and bigger, listen to these great words. It's a different record, but it's still us." The new album also has a number of special guest appearances, among those being Lemmy of Motorhead, Keith Morris and Jello Biafro. "It was a lot of good timing to have these guys on the record. The rock Gods were smiling down on us. What I found out is the more persistent you are when asking people something they will eventually say yes or no."

"I try to write from personal experience and whatever I'm going through. I don't like too much make- believe stuff." The first song, Swingset Superman, tells the Throw Rag story. The second song describes the girls found at the Throw Rag shows. Repulsed at first, but there's something about them and in the air that makes the band oh so sexy. "It's a matter of you like what you see. It might be made up in my head, but it seems real to me."

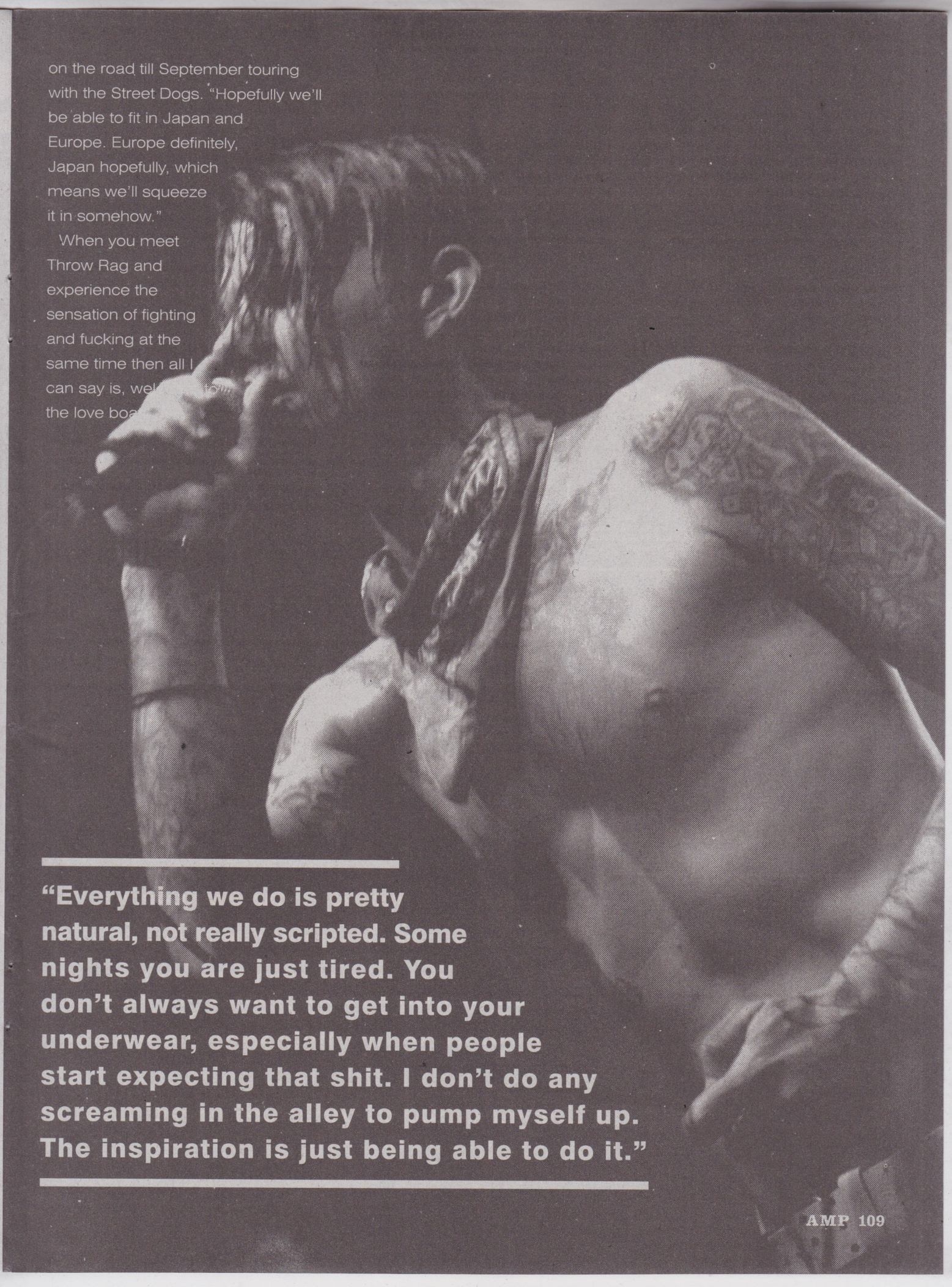
The experience brought on by a Throw Rag show is like none other. This is the best live band by far right now with the Captain and fellow washboard player, Action Craig Jackman, stripping through out the songs, teasing the ladies.

"Everything we do is pretty natural, not really scripted. Some nights you are just tired. You don't always want to get into your underwear, especially when people start expecting that shit. I don't do any screaming in the alley to pump myself up. The inspiration is just being able to do it."

What's next for the Rag? They will be doing some dates for the ever-popular kiddy summer camp, the Warped Tour. After that they will be

on the road till September touring with the Street Dogs. "Hopefully we'll be able to fit in Japan and Europe. Europe definitely, Japan hopefully, which means we'll squeeze it in somehow."

When you meet Throw Rag and experience the sensation of fighting and fucking at the same time then all I can say is, wel[illegible] the love boa[illegible]



"Everything we do is pretty natural, not really scripted. Some nights you are just tired. You don't always want to get into your underwear, especially when people start expecting that shit. I don't do any screaming in the alley to pump myself up. The inspiration is just being able to do it."

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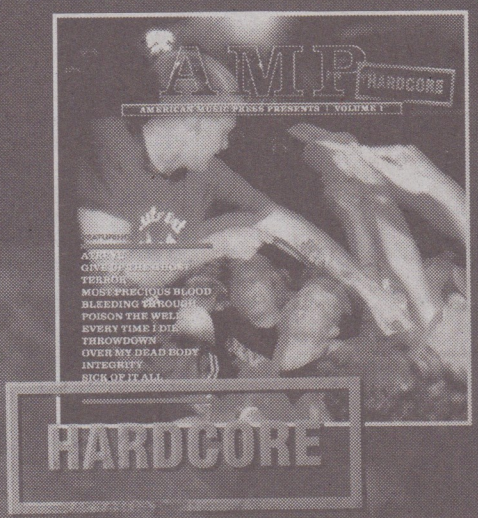
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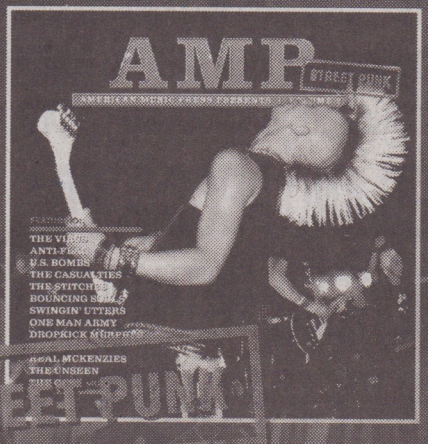
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RAPID FIRE

SHORT INTERVIEWS FOR SHORT ATTENTION SPANS



Profile: Whiskey Rebels
Name: Jimmy
Position in the Band: Bass
Hometown: Sacramento / Bakersfield
The Whiskey Rebels sounds like: I think we sound like the Trouble. But a more illuminative answer is probably Cro Mags, Cock Sparrer, and Social D.
Our label, GMM, is cool because: Some of my favorite bands ever have put out records on GMM: the Trouble, Anti-Heros, Pressure Point, Oxymoron, Hudson Falcons...
Four CD's that are influencing me the most right now are:
Tragedy 'Vengeance'
Turbonegro 'Apocalypse Dudes'
The Trouble 'Nobody Laughs Anymore'
The Observers 'So What's Left Now'
Best thing to do in the van is: Play fun games like The Minister's Cat
Worst driving incident involved: Driving down I-5 from Sacramento to Ventura in the middle of that huge storm that caused all those mudslides in Southern California. We actually had to take a detour because the road we needed to take to get to Ventura had been washed out in a mudslide. Oh, and we had no brakes. And we were running late.
Sacramento has influenced my music how? The quality of bands that comes out of Sacramento never ceases to amaze me. Bands that we came up with, such as American Static, Hanover Saints, Suburban Threat, as well as hardcore bands like Killing the Dream are all putting out great records right now. And bands like Pressure Point, who paved the way for the rest of us and continue to make amazing music, are what make Sacramento such an amazing town, musically.
The kids these days are: Really good at getting all-ages venues shut down. Kids need to think a little further ahead than the after party, and realize that while pulling a fire alarm at the show might make them look extra punk to their friends, there's nothing punk about sitting at home bored on Friday nights because all the all-ages venues got closed down for stupid reasons.
Sex, Thugs, or Rock and Roll? They are like Neapolitan ice cream. Each one by itself is great, but altogether it's delicious!
Social Distortion or Blood For Blood? That's like choosing between thin crust and deep dish pizza. They're totally different experiences, but either one will leave you satisfied.
Sacramento or San Francisco? SACRAMENTO!
When we're not on tour we earn our living by: Working in a warehouse, working in a different warehouse, working at a coffee shop, working at a law office and painting.
Upcoming tours or releases: We just put out Create or Die, our second full-length for GMM Records. And we also just put out a split called California Republic with our friends Monster Squad, the Abuse and Cropknox on Rodent Popsicle Records. And we also helped put together a Sacramento Scene Report on TKO Records featuring us, Pressure Point, American Static, Killing the Dream and the Secretions. We spent most of 2004 in the studio, so we're going to try to hit the road more in 2005, and we are planning to go to Europe in early 2006.
Best Bad Religion disc? How Could Hell Be Any Worse? 80 - 85 has all the key jams on it. Though I can't imagine why you asked us this question. We are about as influenced by Bad Religion as we are by bicycles.
Favorite thing about playing shows? The sappy answer: being on stage with my 4 closest friends, doing something we all love and have spent the past 5 years working towards. The funny answer: drink tickets & deli trays...
Band that still gives me the chills when I see them live: Riverboat Gamblers
Web info:
Whiskeyrebels.com

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Aquabats

By Dane Jackson / Photography By Ben Clark

The saying goes "good things come to those who wait," and in the case of Aquabats' fans, nothing could be more truthful. After waiting six long years, the superheroes of independent music have emerged triumphant with CHARGE!!, a 13 track masterpiece out now on Nitro Records. Besides a new label and album, the Aquabats are also in the middle of a summer tour. This is all good news for the initiated. For those of you new to these guys, please allow me to give you a brief introduction.

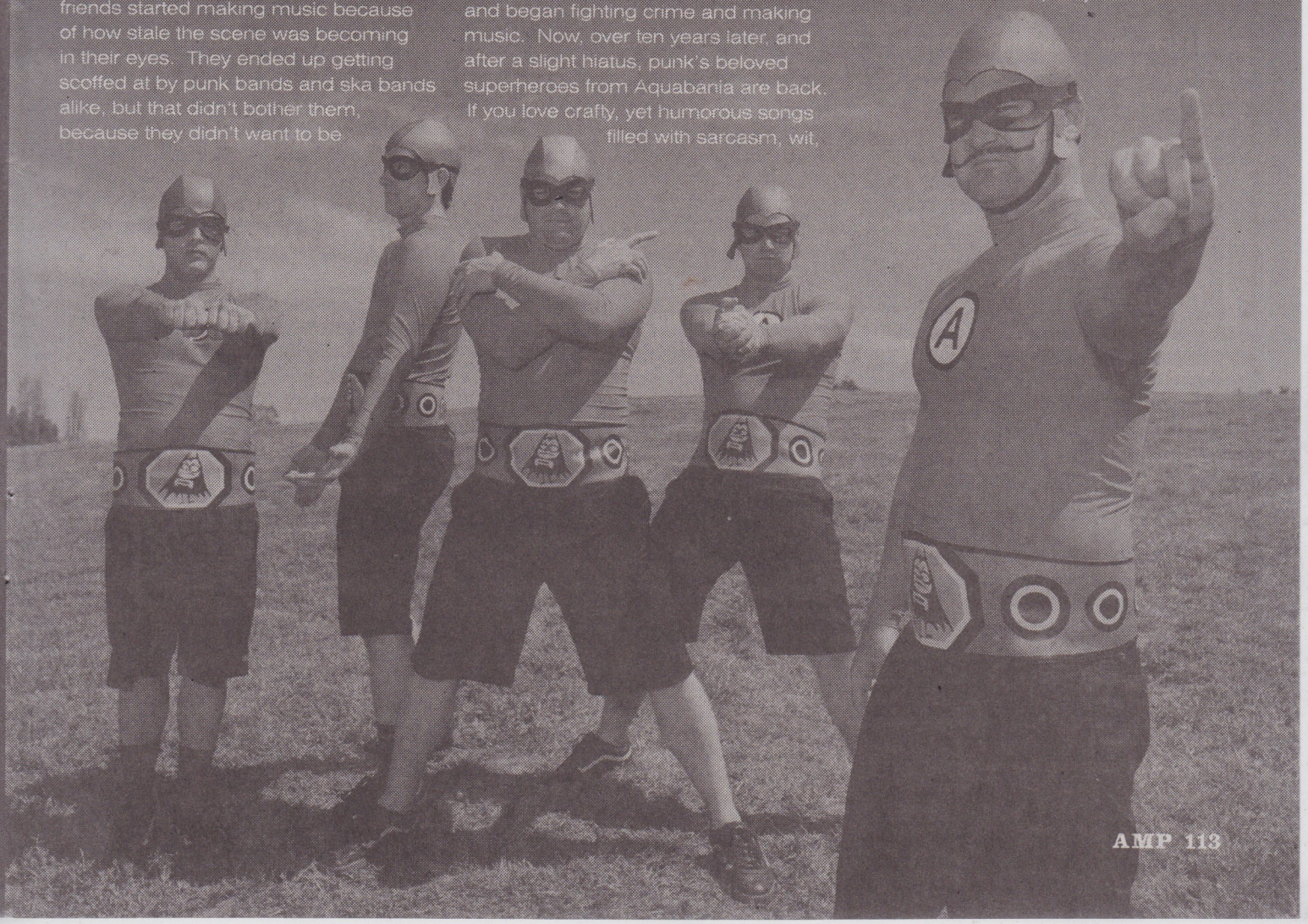
It all started in the mid-'90s Southern California punk scene when a group of friends started making music because of how stale the scene was becoming in their eyes. They ended up getting scoffed at by punk bands and ska bands alike, but that didn't bother them, because they didn't want to be taken seriously anyways. It was in those days that they all donned their costumes and began fighting crime and making music. Now, over ten years later, and after a slight hiatus, punk's beloved superheroes from Aquabania are back. If you love crafty, yet humorous songs filled with sarcasm, wit, and self-deprecation, then CHARGE!! should be right up your alley. Below, lead singer MC Bat Commander talks about everything from the definition of nerds to his thoughts on today's music scene.

Now besides the live DVD that came out last year, there hasn't been much Aquabat activity lately. Why did it take you about six years to make a new record?

Well, if you don't have a record deal or any money it helps to slow things down a bit.

Are you happy with how the Nitro release came out?

Yeah, we are all real happy with it. We wanted to make a pretty solid record



"You know we never claimed to be a ska band, ever, and although we have some ska-ish songs we haven't really had much of the 'ska' sound since 1997."

and I think we did.

For those fans who think you're a ska band, do you think they'll be upset with the lack of "ska" music on the disc?
You know we never claimed to be a ska band, ever, and although we have some ska-ish songs we haven't really had much of the 'ska' sound since 1997. We lost our trumpets along the way and have tried to honor their memory by not replacing them. I think there are kids that lament the lack of "ska" but it is really the horns they miss not what they think is ska. Oh well, sorry there are plenty of other horn laden ska bands to like... so go like them better. Real fans of the Aquabats like what we are and what we are trying to do...regardless.

Besides having less members these days, how have you changed since the beginning of the Goldenvoice days?
Of course, we are older, fatter, and I think a lot wiser for wear. I think some people expect bands to live in a bubble and stay the same. We are not going to keep making the same record over and over that is so boring. But we will always be the Aquabats!

How does it feel to be the only real superheroes in music?
Well good and bad. Good because it is fun and we don't have to compete with Creed metal-emo-core and bad because we always have to prove ourselves. But that goes along with the territory.

Do you see yourself ever battling the likes of GWAR?
We did a radio battle with GWAR back in 1996. Been there done that. We won... for now. I don't really want a re-match. I don't want blood and juice all over my shoes.

To date, who has been your most powerful arch villain?
Cobra-man.

What can fans expect from CHARGE!!?
A rip snorting good time. A timeless epic. At least ten bucks.

Do you think this essentially characterizes a true Aquabats' sound?
Well, it has to, because there are no other Aquabats' records coming out this year. This is what we sound like now, so this is a true record. We aren't changing from being the Aquabats but has our sound evolved and devolved? Yes, it has. Take it or leave it.

I've heard people label you as a nerd-core band. Do you consider yourselves nerds?
Yes. Yes, we do.

What are the defining characteristics of nerds?
Not "cool" in a hip trendy kinda way. But clever, smart and ahead of the curve. Thinkers and doers. Don't fit in with the popular kids etc.

Who is your all-time favorite nerd?
Abe Lincoln

From the beginning it seems like you're about having a good time and involving your fans with all facets of your music. Do you think that mentality is one missing in today's music scene?
For the most part self indulgent rock star wannabees are ruling the music scene these days. It isn't really about talent it's more about fashion. It isn't about music it is more about selling some kind of false rebellion. There are so few bands/people doing anything original or interesting these days and it is not like I am saying WE are SO original either. I am just saying, let the blind lead the blind. We just want to have fun and I think the kids get that.

What do you think of indie and emo?
Well those are such broad terms. I can't lump all bands together in a classification or a label like that. Because I hate it when people label our band as 'ska' or 'new-wave' or what ever. Indie could be so many different things you know. As far as what most people consider 'emo' or 'new-core' or what ever for the most part I think if it has no real melodies then it is boring. Just screaming into the mike because you feel alienated or 'alone' or whatever is...BORING! Linkin Park called they want their songs back. Unsane called they want their sound back. But there are bands I think do it well and I give props to.

Are there any hard feelings with former 'Bats like Baron Von Tito, Cat Boy, and Prince Adam?
Not really. I mean those guys left to do other things that they had to do in their own lives to get where they wanted to go...you know? So there can't really be any hard feelings, those guys are our friends and we have been like brothers at times so....there you go.

When you're not being a superhero, what do you do with your time?
Waste it.

What is your secret identity?
That is a secret.

If I understand it correctly, your band came about to break the cycle and repetitiveness of the '90s punk rock scene. Do you think you were able to achieve that?
No, but it has been fun to forge our own scene out of our original whim.

What was it about the music scene that made you want to be different?
It was just so not creative and it was so Jock jams. It was like everyone was copying other bands and fighting for no reason. And I think the original spirit of 'punk' needed a shift. You know we made a lot of bands mad because we weren't "mad" and 'angry'.

I remember seeing you at the 1998 Warped Tour and during your set, NOFX spent a little bit of time making fun of you during their set. Do you find it normal that bands don't take you seriously?
Yes. I think NOFX gets what we are doing...kind of though. We have talked with Fat Mike and those guys and I think he is really cool and he respects that we are doing something different and I respect them because they did something different with punk and stuck by it. But they are leaders. Those guys are not followers so a little ribbing from a band like NOFX is actually a kind of acceptance in a way. But there are so many followers in other bands that it doesn't really bother us that they don't take us seriously you know? Why should they? We aren't really a band to take seriously. We don't take our selves seriously, why should anyone else?

Do you want people to take you seriously?
Not really, we just want people to join in on the fun. You can't stop us, so join us. You know? Join us in making fun of ourselves and yourselves.

What kinds of plans do you have in support of the new album?
Touring and more videos. We haven't made a lot, which I think has hurt us. So, we want to make more.

Are you excited about your summer tour with The Phenomenauts?
Yeah, those guys are great. They have a commander, a robot, a jimmy, and professor and lots of smoke machines. It will be like touring with ourselves!

What can the uninitiated expect from an Aquabats' show?
Sweaty teens and sweatier out of shape dudes in rubber helmets.

How was the time you spent with Dicky Barrett on his morning show?
Really cool. Dicky is one of the coolest people we have had the pleasure of meeting in this past decade. He is a big supporter of our band and we are really grateful to him. Cups up!

Do you wish he would quit that gig and end the Bosstones' hiatus?
No. He has a great gig. He is happy and he is doing what he wants. What are his incentives for going back out on the road? Nostalgia? Doing it for the "gipper"? I think he is right where he wants to be.

Do you think online downloading hurts independent music?
Yes but it also exposes people to variety and information faster. Which is like a strainer. Like it's straining out all of the mediocre and bringing attention, through downloading, to the bands that are more interesting or harder to find. It might hurt the industry more than it hurts bands...you know?

At one point, I know Aaron from RBF was an Aqua Cadet, are there any other high profile folks that you can reveal as official Cadets?
Well, he is still a Cadet. Once a cadet always a cadet. And I can't tell you any more than that. But I can give you one hint. Mad Max and Braveheart is an Aqua Cadet.

What are the benefits of becoming a Cadet?
Self-Esteem.

What does the future hold for The Aquabats?
The future is so bright we gotta wear shades.

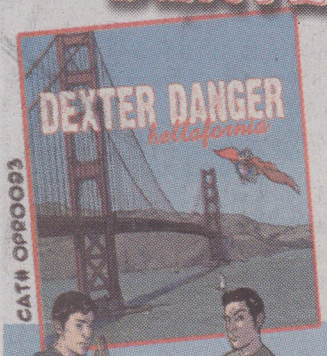
And lastly, and possibly most importantly, did Roger ever reunite with Elizabeth?
No. He is a nerd.



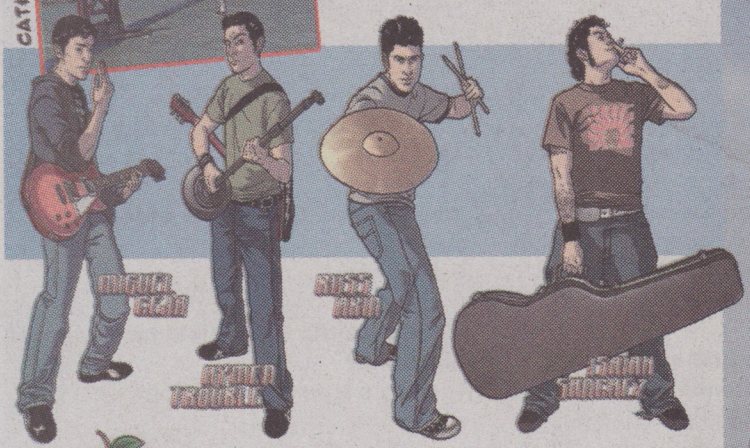
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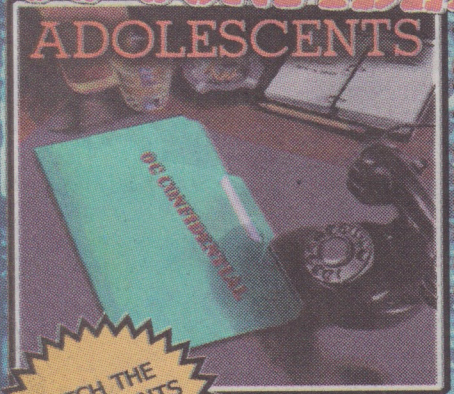
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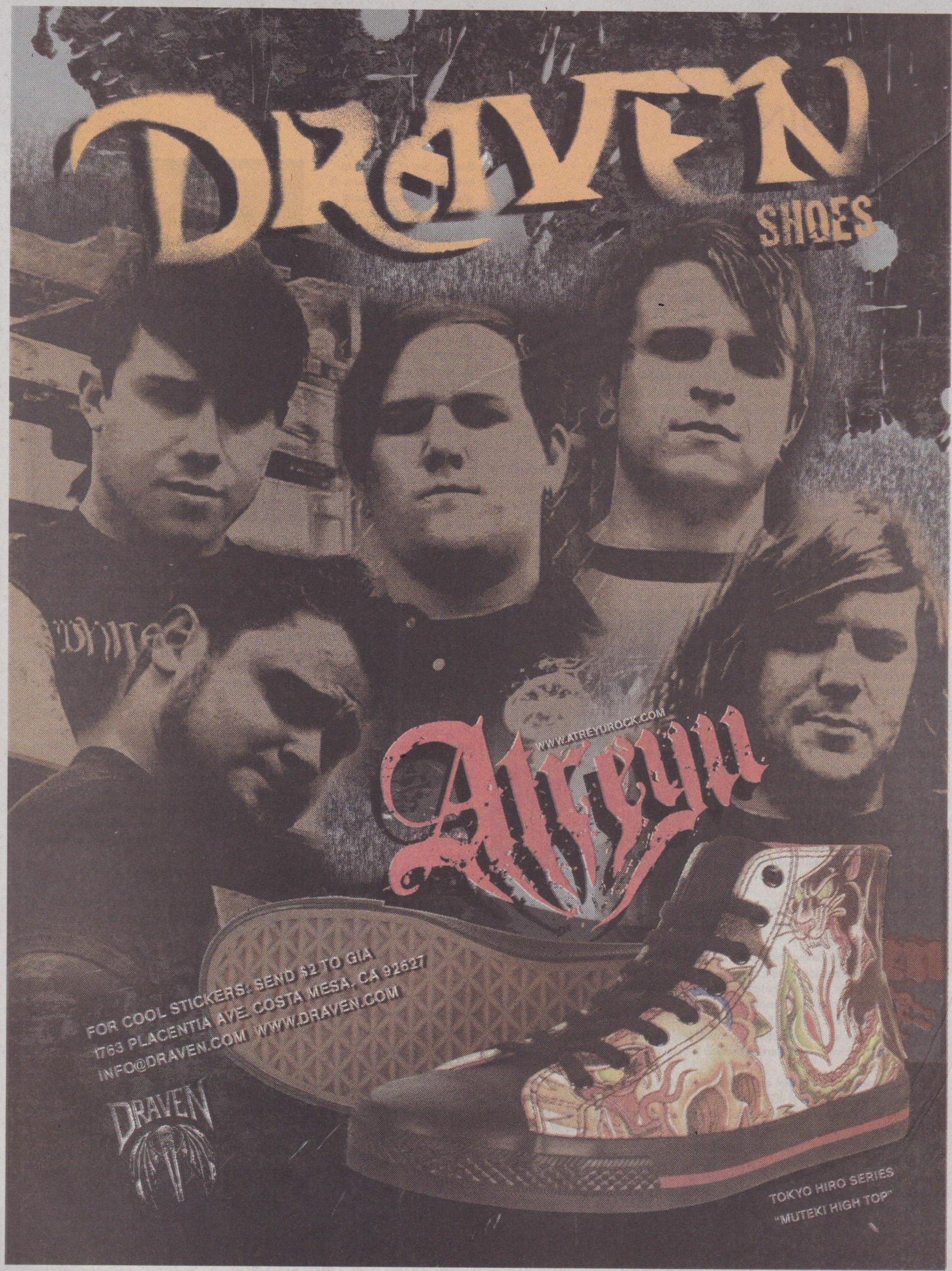
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AL QUINT

July Entry:

ANATOMY OF A MIX TAPE

So I have the door to my house open, letting in the fresh air and I wonder if my neighbors are enjoying the Bomb Builder 12" I have cranked up nice and loud. Have to scribble a review while writing the rest of this column. I imagine my neighbor from across the street, Ronnie, might wonder what the racket is. He was shocked to learn there's still punk rock in this day and age. He's boomer-aged and I made his day when I ripped him a copy of Ellen's Buffalo Springfield CD... shhh... don't tell the music biz police. Actually, tell 'em. I don't give a fuck. He was extolling the virtues of the Eagles' concert he saw on TV when I ran into him yesterday, returning from my daily walk. Last night, while flipping channels, I caught a few minutes of said concert on one of the cable stations—it was Joe Walsh's turn at the mike, doing "Rocky Mountain Way." Now I loved that song when it came out in 1973 and still won't turn it off. In fact, I have it on my MP3 player in the "iRiver Mix" folder, which is a collection of over 700 miscellaneous songs spanning the 50s to now, although most of the songs are from the 70s and 80s and a mix of punk, metal and classic rock. It's a great tune. Not as good as "Funk #49" by his previous band the James Gang but it's still a solid rocker.

But this performance? So watered-down sounding. Two drummers? Horn players? For that song? Walsh still uses the talk box for the guitar break and that was pretty cool but it sounded tame. Devoid of energy. And his spotted pants were a hideous fashion statement. The blonde hair dye just a little too obvious. Jurassic rock. The nostalgia circuit.

Still, I'm a nostalgic sort. I actively seek out new music but have no problems reminiscing about the past and seeing it come back to life, especially if the bands still play with a modicum of the energy they had. During the month of May, I saw reunion shows for two bands that meant a great deal to me in my early to mid-20s and still mean a lot to me to this day. I also saw a band from Sweden who started in the 80s and are still cranking out high-energy, high-intensity music.


MDC

MDC came through the area with the original lineup in early in the month. Dave Dictor, Mikey "Offender" Donaldson (one of the best bass players in hardcore), Ron Posner and even Al Schvitz. It was a bit loose at times but they played very well and the two shows I saw were at DIY venues. They were touring around in a van and a trailer. No rock star trips. Doing it because they still want to, I imagine. It seems genuine and still heartfelt. Al even had his son along for the tour and the kid wasn't even born when I first heard the band in 1982.

At the shows, Dave talked about punk being a music for the freaks—I may not look like a freak on the outside, having never really gone in for punk fashion, except for wearing band shirts and some buttons on my jacket, but I always felt like one on the inside. A misfit. An outsider. "Business on Parade," "America's So Straight," "Church and State" and "Born To Die" Those hit me goddamned fucking hard as I played a tape of the album while commuting to a much-despised job in 1982—and, as I write this, the 23rd anniversary of starting that job is coming up next week. Jesus fucking christ...

The audiences in Cambridge and Haverhill, Mass. were mostly made up of people who were born after the first MDC album came out, just like Al's son. I don't know if that's the case elsewhere, but it was true around here. It made me wistful, in a way, because I wonder what happened to all those people I used to see in the 80s. There were a few older faces at both shows but it was a vast minority. In Cambridge, Dave put his arm around my shoulder and pointed out to the youthful gathering that I was probably the only person there who saw them in '82. I'd guess that's also true for their 1983 Rock Against Reagan show. But we're both still here. I'll leave it to others to decide if that's cool or pathetic. I'm kind of happy about it, myself.

I did see a lot of those old faces a few weeks later at the Gang of Four show in Boston. Two of 'em, it had been at least 10-15 years. A span of the ages, actually. Anyway, Gang Of Four's original lineup—Jon King, Andy Gill, Dave Allen and Hugo Burnham–have re-formed for the first time in over 20 years. I never did get to see that lineup on the "Entertainment" tour—had the chance but blew it BIG time. By the time I saw them in '82, they were well past their prime and the show I saw in the early 90s, on a very odd bill with Sisters of Mercy, Public Enemy, Young Black Teenagers and Warrior Soul, wasn't really that great, although I might have convinced myself otherwise at the time. Anyway, these guys are about a decade younger than the guys in the Eagles but all of 'em are close to 50 but that didn't slow them. It was a long break after Radio 4's not-too-hot set of dance-oriented rock (they were a lot better as a three-piece when, admittedly, they were mining Gang of Four and early Cure for all it was worth) and the anticipation built until Gill broke the silence with the jabbing guitar signature for "Return The Gift." This was the real deal—a thumping rhythm provided by Allen and Burnham, Gill's slashing guitar creating tension and a searing counterpoint and King's energetic stage presence. They conveyed attitude and arrogance but also embraced the audience—it was definitely a reciprocal admiration society. The set list came mainly from the first two albums, along with "To Hell With Poverty" and two songs from "Songs Of The Free." Even "We Live As We Dream" had a lot more energy than the recorded version.


AVSKUM

More highlights—a tightly-wound "Paralysed" and "He'd Send In The Army," with King cracking an aluminum baseball bat against a microwave oven for a percussive effect and the song sputtering and grooving until the ultimate release. The line about "hey boy—seen any action?" ringing out loudly in this era of US military engagement. Much the same way that the line about "some are insane/and they're in charge" on "To Hell With Poverty" is more prescient than ever. Gill's guitar pyrotechnics for "Anthrax" were curtailed a bit for the buildup and then the solo, which consisted of him shaking and throwing the guitar, between swigs of beer. A mischievous version and still effective. The encore of "I Found That Essence Rare" also packed a wicked punch.

No going through the motions and with a timeless quality. It was a kinetic performance. Not bad for a bunch of "old guys."

Gang of Four's influence continues to be felt to this day... later that week, I saw Giant Haystacks play a basement show in Allston and they certainly draw from that muse, along with a healthy dose of the Minutemen. Tightly-arranged songs with dynamic instrumentation and memorable hooks in the right places. Sure, it's derivative but done well. That began a crazy weekend of shows that got me pretty sick for the next week but it was worth the coughing, wheezing, sore ribs, etc... actually, before Giant Haystacks, I was at another basement show—a one-night return for Bloodstains Across Somerville and including the ripping Eske, from Chicago and new Boston punk asskickers 40 Watts.

The next day, it was out to Albany for the Gloomfest at Valentine's. Jerry's Kids had cancelled the week before and Nine Shocks Terror cancelled at the absolute last minute but I would have made the trip anyway. Avskum were the third 'old' band I mentioned above and they played with a reckless energy. I've enjoyed their records but, live, it was something else. Loud and overpowering and, once again, showing that age isn't an impediment to kicking ass! I managed to see all the bands, except for the Bones Brigade reunion with their old vocalist Andrew, and I also missed Artie's "abortion" that started the Shemps' set and sprayed the audience with a disgusting substance (I was buying records downstairs) but their cheesy garage punk, once again, was a whole lot of fun.

A lot of rage over the course of 10 or so hours—speed metal mania by Toxic Holocaust, energetic hardcore from Direct Control, Sick and Tired, the Rites,

AL QUINT

Career Suicide, Straight To Hell (although their vocalist Aaron looked as though he couldn't wait to get off the stage) and the Jury, solid D-beat tribute from No Fucker and a fired-up set by Fucked Up, who opened with Jerry's Kids' "I Don't Belong"—very funny.

So after a not-so-great night's sleep at a friend's house in Albany—his four cats were staring at me all night because I was trying to sleep on their couch, I headed back home, got a few more z's and then caught Avskum again the next night at Regeneration Records in Boston. They were just as smoking and it was better in the more intimate record store. Pinko and the Action Boys, a band from Maine who have been around a long time but keep a pretty low profile, also impressed with a speedy hardcore attack and Unholy Trinity's technical death metal was well-played.

That's a lot of rock and not even all the shows I saw last month. The summer looks just as action-packed. I'm looking forward to it. If age can't stop those bands I saw, why should it stop me?



ON TO THE RECORD REVIEWS!

AFTER THE BOMBS-Terminal Filth · Stench Bastard EP (Sjakk Matt Plater, 7" EP)

Heavy-duty crusty crossover from Montreal (and a member from Norway), with Janick from Hellbound on vocals. Thick, raw production and Janick's voice is buried in a little in the mix but her nasty rasp emerges from the chaos. Four bruisers in an early Sacrilege (the UK band, not the west coast one) vein. Fuckin' brutal. (PO Box 7008, 0306 Oslo, NORWAY, afterthebombs@hotmail.com)

ARMISTICE-Fluff and Stuff—The EPs & The Early Years (Despotic, LP)

Hard-driving peace punk from the west coast. The punked-out Pooh and Piglet on the LP label is cute but there's nothing all that cuddly or fluffy about the music. Ravenous Discharge and Scandinavian-inspired hardcore, with varying sound quality but played with raw verve. Recorded between '94 and '98—when this sound wasn't all that 'trendy' and, as indicated, from various releases. Three of the songs are unreleased versions. (PO Box 832, Long Beach, CA 90801, www.despotic-records.tk)

BOMB BUILDER-Deadful Melody (Gloom, 12" EP)

Life is unfair sometimes... you're probably going to have a hard time getting this record, since it's limited to 120 copies and not supposed to be re-pressed. Ridiculous. These recordings were supposed to come out on a split with Western Mass. band Sick and Tired but it never happened, so Gloom has done this 12" pressing. From Cleveland, with various members of Nine Shocks Terror and Gordon Solie Motherfuckers involved (Wedge, Shaun) and it's a full-tilt buzzbomb, as you'd expect from the parties involved. Pile-driving hardcore punk with lots of burn and flail and featuring a wanton cover of the Stalin's "Stop JAP." "Censorshit" takes a raucous mid-tempo turn and if I still was doing my radio show over the airwaves (as opposed to the internet), I'd play it loudly and dedicate it to the motherfucking FCC. Ripping shit... track it down, have someone tape it, but it's worth the effort. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212, www.gloomrecords.com)

ESKE-Big Trouble In Little Village (Southkore, 7" EP)

AKA Los Eskeletos. This one came out awhile ago but, after seeing them play a kickass set at a basement show around here, I realized I still hadn't reviewed it. Anyway, loud/fast hardcore from the fertile Pilsen scene in Chicago. Raw, aggressive and bellicose, with lyrics in both Spanish and English, taking a darker turn for the murder fantasy of "Wicked Dreams." A roaring tandem of buzzing guitar and bass, propulsive drumming and Louie's braying voice. (2814 S. Spaulding Ave., Chicago, IL 60623)

KNEE DEEP IN SHIT-Fucking Destroyed EP (Nancy Howard, 7" EP)

Fucking DESTROYER—13 songs of angry, pissed-off hardcore punk done in fully-raging fashion and "I Can't Take It (Fuck Music)" is just the opening salvo—the eternal lament of punk turning into some meaningless fashion show instead of an act of rebellion. Hey, even this jaded middle-aged motherfucker is still moved by people who want to make a difference and express it as loudly and aggressively as possible. This will beat your eardrums to a bloody pulp. (Zach Howard, 5726 Sussex Ct., Troy, MI 48098, www.kneedeepinshit.com)

KYKLOOPPIEN SUKUPUUTTO-Kuuluuko Meidän Todella? (Tuska & Ahdistus, 7" EP)

From Finland, in case you couldn't tell and the title means "Do We Really Need To" and it's a lament about the ravages of capitalism, "whore politicans owned by leaders" and stating that "the basic rights are not merchandise." Fast hardcore but with musical complexity and some noise-damaged/off-kilter elements. Crazy-sounding and in a good way. (Kauppapulstikko 32 A 18, 65100 Vaasa, FINLAND, www.tuskajaahdistus.tk)

L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI/OHUZARU-Collection (Six Two Five, CD)

Two Italian bands with shared members, friends, etc and collected from various 7", splits and comps. L'amico Di Martucci have a slightly melodic, early 80s hardcore sound with some youth crew flourishes but no jock-core in sight. A lot of burn with a scorching guitar sound, fast drumming and shouted vocals. Things don't slow down Ohuzaro, although they have some heavier passages and grind moves. The drumming is a little stiff at times but the anger comes out loud and clear. L'amico is more my style, though. (www.625thrash.com)

MÜTANT (Schizophrenic, 7" EP)

Hyper-core—this Japanese band are maybe a little too hyper at times although the crazed assault does make an impression. "Disposition Accelerate," in particular, has a walloping breakdown. Wailing and flailing guitars and drums, with high-pitched vocals. Over-the-top? I'd say so. (17 West 4th, Hamilton, ON L9C 3M2, CANADA, www.schizophrenicrex.com)

RACE AGAINST TIME/REASON OF INSANITY-Split (Burrito, 7" EP)

Two ripping bands team up. Race Against Time hammer ahead with an almost out of control onslaught but never fall apart and the riffs are hot and heavy, accompanied by harsh vocals. Includes a cover of the Bastards' "Cause Of Civilization." Reason Of Insanity take the thrash ride with some speed metal licks sprinkled in and keep up the speedy tempo throughout. Some serious lyrics but also getting silly for "ZZ Thrash," which laments $5 beers. (PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509, www.soundideadistribution.com)

SECRET SEVEN-Take It Back (Thrash Steady Syndicate, CD)

Totally ripping hardcore from Singapore and this CD includes their LP and their songs from two split 7" EPs, plus live video footage—the dancing looks almost polite and there are lots of smiling faces. US and a few Japanese influences ("Nippon E Ai Wo Komete" pays tribute to that country's hardcore), with short/fast/loud songs, occasionally doubling up the speed but not succumbing to grind-itis. Dual vocals (one low, one higher and rabid-sounding) reinforced by a spirited, high-powered blast. (Muhammad Fairuz Bin Taswadi, Blk. 204, Marsiling Drive, #07-208, SINGAPORE 730204, thrashsteadysyndicate.cjb.net)

40 WATTS (demo tape)

Four women from Boston bashing out some furious, tuneful straight-ahead punk. Six loud, snotty songs and Jen's vocals are sarcastic and cutting-sounding. "Every Time I See You I Throw Up In My Mouth A Little (A Love Song)" is definitely one of the best song titles you'll see all month. A strong debut. (http://www.purevolume.com/40watts, 40wattpunx@gmail.com)

AL QUINT

August Entry:

I'm writing this the day after there were terror attacks in London—and I have an email out to my friend George and haven't heard back from him yet. It usually takes him a bit to get back to me so I'm not all that nervous about it. I'm sure he's fine. I'm hoping he's fine. He's an old college friend who I've stayed in touch with off and on over the years. One of the few people I want to stay in touch with because my four years at Boston University were pretty miserable, to be honest. I wasn't really ready for the experience and had tremendous difficulty with the social aspects of college life but George was one of the good ones. Into punk rock, socially conscious, a hardcore leftist and an all-around nice guy. This was 1980-81 and, of course, Ronald Reagan was elected that fall and that began new the new Dark Age of Conservatism. There were some conservatives on our floor of the dorm and I remember George having spirited debates with them, including my roommate Carl, who was a die-hard Republican. I wasn't really all that politically-minded at that point, although my viewpoints were certainly on the left side of the spectrum. Speaking of roommates, George's roommate that year was one of the biggest scumbag drug dealers on campus. That roommate did some nasty shit in their room, including coke, and kept me up many nights playing the Doors at ear-piercing volume. If I never hear "The End" again, it'd be fine with me.

As I said, George was into punk and other cool music. I reviewed Gang Of Four's show last month. I borrowed and taped George's copy of "Entertainment" until I got my own copy some time later. George was a passionate Clash fan, in particular. He bought the import copy of "Sandinista" the night it came out and we spent two nights listening and absorbing this sprawling, flawed 6 sided monster while enjoying a beer or four. I was never a heavy drinker but did consume a fair amount while taking it all in and recall commenting that "Somebody Got Murdered" was the first song on there that sounded like the Clash to me. To this day, it's still a problematic album and I don't play it as much as the three albums that preceded it but it does generate nostalgic feelings. I don't have a lot of happy memories from Boston University (Lesley College, where I met the woman who is now my wife—that's a different matter altogether!) and that listening session is one I still remember fondly.

After graduation, I did see George one time, in the late 80s—his aunt lived about a block down from our old apartment in Lynn and he stopped by to visit. After George graduated from BU, he migrated to England and eventually got a PhD. He also acquired a British accent. I was going through kind of an odd, tumultuous period of my life and maybe didn't make the best impression (not that my social skills are any better developed now but, at 27 or 28, I was still finding my way into adulthood). In any case, I didn't hear from him again for some time after that and, as I've said, contact has been sporadic but we had a regular email correspondence a few years ago. George told me about how he'd put together a benefit show for a fire brigade union in Camden and Strummer had played it—joined on the encore by Mick Jones, the first time they'd played together in 20 years. This was a few months before Strummer's untimely death and it was his last public performance. In 2003, George actually put together a book, The Last Night London Burned that included a photo essay of the show plus writings and reminiscences about the band. I'm not sure about its availability but it's worth tracking down (George's last name is Binette, in case you want to try to locate the book). Quite an accomplishment.

So, once again, two years had passed and the correspondence was infrequent, once again. Over the past weekend, I found his current email address using a Google search and got a fairly quick reply. He told me he's coming to Boston with his wife (finally got married a few years ago) and wants to take in a Red Sox game while here. Now I wait for another reply—and hope for the best.

That's personalizing the current situation in London, where the story is still unfolding and they're trying to dig bodies from the rubble. As usual, it's bringing out a litany of responses all over the political spectrum. There are conspiracy theories, fingers being pointed, etc. Muslims are being targeted, much as they were after 9/11. I have a deadline and I'm still digesting all of it. I've been avoiding the mainstream media as much as possible, especially CNN and, of course, Fox News, although I've heard some incredibly ignorant quotes from their various broadcasts on the Air America radio network. Yes, Air America is a liberal, left-wing network and has its own bias but I think you get closer to the truth by listening to them—or at least get a perspective that's not heard anywhere else in this country.

I forget who said it but I heard the word "blowback" mentioned—blowback for the US invasion and occupation of Iraq. A war built on a lie, a fabrication. If one believes the so-called Downing Street Memo, this invasion was in the planning stages for a long time. Of course, Bush's rationale was finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which proved non-existent. Somehow, along the way, that reason for invasion disappeared—then it turned into bringing democracy to Iraq. So far, not so good. Over 1700 US soldiers dead. And no one keeps track of how many civilians in Iraq have been MURDERED by these actions. Bush continues to justify it. On June 28, he said "We either deal with terrorism and this extremism abroad, or we deal with it when it comes to us." Well, some time after he was standing on an aircaft carrier with a sign that said "Mission Accomplished," the terror is still coming to us—or, more specifically, to London. No, it's not the US but you know what I mean.

I heard Mike Malloy, one of the Air America hosts, refer to the US as the biggest terrorist nation in the world (I'm paraphrasing here but, in essence, that's what he said). I'm not sure I completely agree with that but the actions in Iraq might qualify as terrorism. He also believes that the administration should be impeached and tried for war crimes. I agree with that quite a bit more.

But, sure, the bombings in London could be retaliation for US military activity. That doesn't make it acceptable, of course. Only a heartless asshole would believe that... but, much as the 9/11 attacks need to be viewed in context, it's the same with these actions, as well.

ON TO THE RECORD REVIEWS!

ACCÜSED-Oh Martha! (Condar, CD)

A few years back, Blaine Cook revived the Fartz and now it's the return of the Accüsed and the crossover merchants return with their best album since sometime in the 80s. Truth be told, I haven't played many of their records in recent years except for "Return of Martha Splatterhead" and, nope, it's not quite up to that level but this album is still a non-stop shredder. Perfectly riding the line between thrash-metal and hardcore punk. Horrorific artwork throughout the booklet and the lyrical themes are on the ghoulish side but, dig beneath the surface, and they're a commentary on a lifeless, zombie-like society. 12 new songs, cover of Tank's "Filth Hounds of Hades" and Olivia Go-To-The-John's "Have You Never Been Mellow" (the Feederz still did the definitive version, though), plus a re-recording of the "Martha" EP that doesn't improve on the original but is given a solid thrashing. Glad to have 'em back. (www.splatterrock.com)

ANNIHILATION TIME-II (Manic Ride, CD)

Yeah, it's been out awhile but I finally got a copy. The first full-length with Jimmy Rose on vocals, following up their "Bad Reputation" EP and the band also now includes Jimmy's ex-Gordon Solie Motherfuckers bandmate Shaun Filley on guitar. Shaun also did the colorful album artwork. The transition to rock 'n roll badass unit is complete, although some of the Flag/Bl'ast worship remains, such as the nick from "Life Of Pain" on "Bigger Problems" and "Too High To Die" also harkens back to the band's debut EP. Meanwhile, "Dogends" brings to mind Captain Beyond, with more cowbell, motherfucker... and they also offer a credible take on the Pink Fairies' "Teenage Rebel." "Yuppie Killer" is an enjoyable murder fantasy, with bloodsoaked lyrical images. Spirited, loose and rockin' up a goddamned storm. (PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101, www.manicriderecords.com)

BLANK STARE (self-released, 7" EP)

One of the new crop of Boston straight-edge bands that come from the hardcore punk side of things instead of more jockish realm. Starting with a hard-heavy intro, then Benjamin yells "STRAIIIIIIIIIGHT EDGE" and the band are off and running. Short, speedy blasts mixing 80s-era hardcore with some

AL QUINT

pretty sick mosh breakdowns, as well. Strong lyrics—not just anti-drug but also anti-sex trade for "Choice or Coercion" and dealing with sexual identity for "What I Was Born With." (revolutionthrash@yahoo.com)


BLANK STARE


COLISEUM

COLISEUM-Goddamage (Manic Ride, CD-EP)

A power-packed 8 song EP, following up Coliseum's ripping LP on Level Plane. Ryan Patterson, who plays guitar in Black Cross, adds vocals to his duties in this four-piece. A roaring amalgam of crusty hardcore and rock 'n roll fury. Ryan's hoarse vocals are accompanied by a twin-guitar blast leading the forceful attack. This sound is a full-fledged trend at this point, I suppose (yeah, there are similarities to certain bands from that big city in Oregon) but the songs hit hard. (PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101, www.manicriderecords.com)

FUNERAL SHOCK (Six Weeks, LP)

First LP for this Bay Area band, which includes Jeff from Capitalist Casualties. Solid hardcore punk with a strong 80s west coast influence ala Black Flag, Germs, etc. The Flag/Rollins inspiration comes out strongest for the lurching, creeping "Sleaze Addict/Two Rules." Varying between medium fast and thrashier tempos, with snarly vocals from Jason Von Satan. Some dark lyrical themes—urging on the destruction of West Point, dreaming up revenge for a claimed wrongful conviction for domestic violence, observing inner city decay. Might not win friends with the more "PC" crowd, actually. Emptying out a twisted mind and bashing out some equally twisted sounds. (225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

OMENS-Destroy The ESP (Hipsville International, CD)

Oooooh yeah! Fuzzed-out garage rock stomp from the Rocky Mountain state. Stomping and primitive, in the same vein as the more aggressive early Cynics songs and Michael Daboll howls and yowls with savage cool. The drumming bashes through the floor and the guitars create a psychotic wall of barbed sound. Going down a road well-traveled but running a few traffic lights along the way. (2591 South Meade Street, Denver, CO 80219, www.hipsville-records.com)

OUT COLD-Looking Through Communist Eyes (ACME, DVD)/Planned Accidents (ACME, 7" EP)

Artless once had a song called "How Much Punk Rock Do You Hear In Russia." Well, Out Cold bring their blazing hardcore punk to St. Petersburg for this DVD, recorded in August of 2004. A single camera shot, not all that polished but that's just fine. Not only is there punk rock in Russia, there are also circle pits and even a wall of death as Out Cold play in front of an enthusiastic audience and tear through their songs in typically no-bullshit fashion. Raw and in your face, the way it should be. 18 songs in about half an hour, including two encores and, by the end, drummer John Evicci is collapsed behind his drum kit. This show was part of a grueling tour that started in Iceland and went through Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland–you can read the tour diary on the ACME website. The band also have a new 5 song EP and just as you'd expect. Exuding anger and pain with howling vocals and a fusillade of guitar, bass and drums. Not just 1-2-3-thrash, either—the mid-tempo "That Hurt" has some cool guitar/bass interplay in the middle. The latest lineup continues to recharge Out Cold. (PO Box 441, Dracut, MA 01826, acmerecords.net)

PROVOKED-Prepare For The Cold (Profane Existence, CD)/ Infant In The Womb Of Warfare (Profane Existence, CD)

Two albums from this Minneapolis band—"Infant In The Wound Of Warfare" was recorded in 2003 and this is its first time on CD, including songs from a split with Path of Destruction. "Prepare For The Cold" is brand new. During the interim, Kerri has replaced Scaba on vocals but there's not a major difference in style—both women have raspy voices that could tear the paint from the walls, although each also have a wider range than just howling. Energetic, crusty hardcore with occasional melodic passages and with a tightening up on the new album. Not quite as raw as on "Infant," which starts with the band chanting the classic line from "Network"—"I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore" and that anger comes out on the politically-charged lyrics, which often take a personal turn. Two loud, powerful works and both with haunting cover art. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

HOLY MOUNTAIN-Entrails (No Idea, CD)/Wrath (No Idea, 7" EP)

Holy Mountain are from Florida but there's a strong Swedish hardcore influence, as well as similarities with Tragedy and bands of that ilk. Lead vocalist Dan (aka Ponch) used to play bass for Combat Wounded Veteran but this is a different approach. Dramatic, powerful hardcore with howling vocals, sweeping passages and melodic underpinnings and played at a mainly blistering pace. "Entrails," the band's latest full-length, comes charging out of the gate with "The Lines Are Drawn" and seldom flags. "Wrath" is a 3 song 7" EP released shortly before the album and none of them are on "Entrails." I liked the album a bit more but the results are still raging. The lengthy title track deals with the sad history of lynching, especially cogent considering that when the Senate had a resolution that condemned lynching, the sponsorship wasn't unanimous and most of the holdouts were southern Republicans. A scream from Red State Amerika. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604, www.noidearecords.com)


HOLY MOUNTAIN

RINGERS (CD-R, demo)

Killer pop/punk from Boston, with former members of Sirens and vocalist/guitarist Ross Noyes was also recently in the underrated Refuseniks. When I say pop/punk, I mean such bands as Crimspshrine or Fifteen, along with a healthy dose of Clash guitar jab. Gigantic hooks, killer singalongs, coming from the gut. This is for the basement, not the fucking Warped tour. They'll soon have a 7" released on 1-2-3-4, Go! Records out of Seattle. (Regeneration Records, 155 Harvard Ave., Allston, MA 02134, rossnoyes@yahoo.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903, suburbanvoice@earthlink.net/Sonic Overload radio: http://sonicoverload.moocowrecords.com

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rufio

"The Comfort of Home"

Interview with Jon Berry (with Scott Sellers collaborating)

By Kristopher Todd Upjohn / Photography By Myriam Santos Kayda

Tell me where you got your name and why you chose "The Comfort of Home" (Nitro Records) as the title of the new record.
We got the name Rufio from a GWAR video. We chose "The Comfort of Home" as our title because of how relevant it is to Rufio. For the past two years we've spent out most of our lives on the road, living out of suitcases and hotel rooms. It sometimes feels like the road is our home, and home is our vacation.

As is increasingly prominent in the indie rock scene, you seem to fuse a multitude of styles. If someone put a gun to your head and forced you to answer the question, what genre would you generally say you are? (I know bands hate being categorized but I always find it interesting to hear the answer... and don't make me put a gun to your head...)
If I had to give us a category, it would be: Post Melodic Rock Pop Metal Core.

Is there an overall theme or direction to Rufio's music, in your opinion; as in personal, political, social, etc.?
Rufio isn't much of a political band, we just like to rock out. We tend to sing about issues that are close to us.

How long has Rufio been together?
We started playing five years ago in our drummer's garage.

Are you playing the kind of music you originally envisioned or did you even have an idea of what you were looking for before you all got together and started jamming?
When we first started playing, we were really influenced by fast skate punk at the time, and it really reflected in our music. Now I feel like our new songs have evolved much more since then. Which I feel is related to the fact that our musical tastes and influences have expanded.

Have you had the opportunity to share the stage with any of your influences or heroes yet?
Our very first tour was with the band Strung Out. We never imagined that we would get the chance to share the stage with such an amazing band. Since then we've been on the road with other rock heroes of ours such as Lagwagon, Alkaline Trio, and the Offspring.

What's your favorite kind of music for listening?
Lately I've been listening to music that has lots of production and multiple instruments, such as Silverchair. I love the multiple layers of instruments, key changes, and vocal melodies they do.

The lyrics in "A View to Save" actually come across as very erotic (very well written, by the way). Was this meant to be as arousingly phrased as it is?
Yeah, I wanted to have a "sexy" song on the record. Chick's dig it, right??



"We try to leave some room for the imagination. It's not as fun when you're all straight up: 'I wanna have sex with you.'"

Was your attempt to generate strong imagery with minimal prose (the lyrics say everything without being crude or overly specific)?
We try to leave some room for the imagination. It's not as fun when you're all straight up: "I wanna have sex with you."

Is there a deeper meaning behind these lyrics besides love or seduction?
The song is pretty much about strong desire and attraction, and wanting to act on your desires.

"Drowning" seems to tackle the fear of love. In one way, it could be taken pessimistically, as if it's just a matter of time before one falls from his or her love-induced high to a painful crash. Fair assessment?
It's a pretty fair assessment of the song. It deals with the vulnerability of being so close to another person.

Elaborate on this line: "I will never hold you underneath for me. Maybe only just enough so you can breathe. Just another anchor in your life, drowning over my love."
I wrote that out of frustration, and mostly for my girlfriend. I was at a point in my life when I felt like I was going nowhere with music, and at the same time I felt I was holding my girlfriend back from her goals and expectations by staying with me. I felt terrible because she would base her life around my completely fucked up schedule.

Is this song saying you fear love because you'll only destroy the person who attaches themselves to you? I ask with this line in mind: "I am afraid, love is blind, in a way, I do not wanna drag you along to a grave meant for me."
I wasn't trying to be totally pessimistic with this song, but it was kind of hard not to. I don't fear love, but it's such a strong emotion, so you've gotta keep it in check.

Is "A Simple Line" your way of saying you don't ever want to move up to a big, mainstream label, that you're happy with your status?
No. It's about Lame, talentless bands getting huge off trends, while other much more deserving groups are left in the dark.

"Never Learn" seems to be about someone who arrogantly refuses to believe they're wrong. Is there anything specific behind this song?
The song was inspired by some of the ridiculous people I meet on the road. Some people just can't control their arrogance.

"Escape" sounds like something written during a moment of despair while touring around, hoping the band makes it somewhere. Did Rufio almost disband, with this song being the result?
I think we came pretty close to "disbanding" after our last headlining tour. I was feeling very frustrated with the band, sick of playing bass, sick of playing the same damn songs every night. But what really helped was writing new songs. I was a good release for everyone.

What's the story behind "Questions and Answers"?
This song was inspired by brother Joe who passed away last year at the age of 20. I was feeling very frustrated at the time. Frustrated with life, with God. The song was written mostly out of angst and the inability to be comforted at such a time.

What are you facing in "Out of Control?"
"Out of Control" is one of those struggles with someone where you both know that things could never work, but you still keep trying for it. It's so ridiculous how often it happens. Ha ha.

What future do you envision for Rufio?
I really can't say what waits for us in the future. We're just really excited to finally have a new CD out that we're all very proud of, and to play new songs live. It feels really good.

Final thoughts?
Buy insurance.

BANDS AND THEIR VANS

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN GULBIN OF LABEL THE TRAITOR



Full Name: Steven Michael Gulbin

Band Name: Label The Traitor

Van Name: Murdock (and our trailer is named "label the trailer")

Make: Chevy

Model: Conversion

Year: 1995

Does the van have any interesting modifications, i.e. loft, bigger engine, diamond windows, fancy paint? Did you do them? Nah... it was pimp when we got it... TV, mood lighting, back bench folds out to a bed (wink-wink, nudge-nudge....)

Where did you get it?
From Chris Benner from the band Digger.

Is there any history behind the van?
Knowing Benner, we were afraid to ask.

How long have you had it?
Six months.

Where have you taken it (tours)?
Just around the Northeast so far....

How many miles have you put on it?
Not a real lot

Where do you plan on taking it (upcoming tours)?
Everywhere and anywhere we can...

Is there a driver in the band, i.e. the one who is always behind the wheel? Who? Why?
Mostly Keats, because he technically owns the van and he doesn't trust my driving skills yet...

Can/do all of you sleep in the van?
We can, but it hasn't been necessary so far...

Any interesting sleeping stories you would like to share, i.e. dreams, sex, etc.?
Evan ALMOST got to "first base," but then she passed out

Do you or any one in the band do the maintenance? If so, to what extent?
I just replaced the rear brake light... felt like a REAL man doing it, too!!!

Tell me about the worst van related horror story, i.e. fire, accident, hit a deer, etc.
My old band's van (Hank... R.I.P.) over heated and the motor seized when we were in Texas... we had to rent a van, finish the tour, and Eric had to drive the van back to Texas and catch a bus home...

Does the band have any van rules? If so, what are they?
No smoking!!!!!

Any advice for those bands who don't have a van and are looking to buy one?
Always look for one with the capability to tow a trailer... it makes life so much easier!!!

Tell me about your dream van?
Nothing too fancy... just a brand new version of the one we have now... with Angelina Jolie as our driver/personal massage therapist...
Not too much to ask, right?

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Circa Survive



By Tracey John

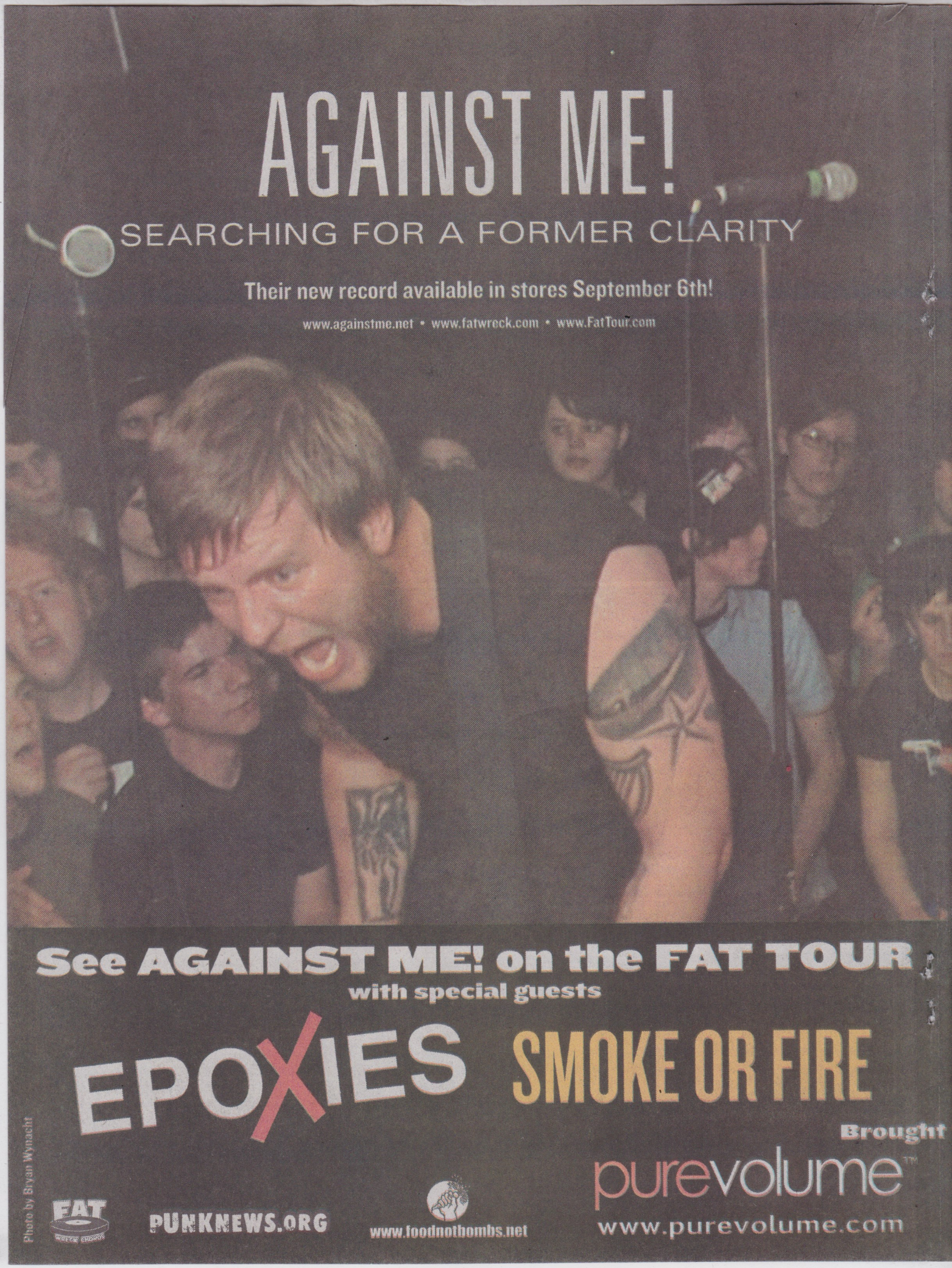
"I made this big mistake and I need to go home," Anthony Green declares anxiously to the woman behind the ticket counter at a Phoenix airport. Before he knew it, the endearing young singer was on a flight home to Philadelphia. And the "big mistake": leaving Philly in the first place. After he had played a casual jam session in Philly with his good friend, guitarist Colin Frangicetto (whose own group This Day Forward had just broken up), Green began having doubts about the state of his music career. His band at the time, California-based screamo outfit Saosin, was heading towards major label land playing "the same kind of music" as everyone else. They were about to embark on a full-fledged tour starting in California as soon as Green arrived from his layover in Phoenix. But he never made it back to California.

"Having to make that decision and telling the guys [in Saosin] was the hardest thing I've ever done," Green recalls outside Circa's show at New York City punk venue The Continental. "It was like breaking up with somebody who you still really cared about and liked," he says with a sigh, "but I knew it wasn't right." What did feel right was playing with Frangicetto. Before the project fully materialized, the newborn group—rounded out by fellow This Day Forward guitarist Brendan Ekstrom, bassist Nick Beard and drummer Steve Clifford—had a deal with Equal Vision Records. To boot, super producer Brian McTernan (Thrice, Cave In, Hot Water Music) expressed interest in working on their forthcoming debut.

About a year later, Juturna was released, an eleven-track tour de force of melodic rock combined with an infectious prog-rock propensity. While their sound isn't easy to pigeonhole, it garners admirable comparisons to like-minded peers Brazil and Coheed & Cambria. "When people ask me what kind of music we play, I just say 'rock 'n' roll,'" Green says, chuckling. "It's all delay and reverb; you put delay and reverb on anything and it sounds progressive," he jests. In all seriousness, he doesn't deny that the band collectively listens to groups like Yes, Tool and Pink Floyd. Not to mention Green's hauntingly distinctive and undeniably effeminate voice. "I do get weirdness because of my vocals sometimes," he explains, "but I don't really think about it that much. It's not a big deal to me."

Another thing Circa Survive don't really think about is their image. "We're just trying to make our presence known by our sound, not by our appearance," Green reasons. That's why you'd be hard-pressed to find a photo of the band without their faces obstructed. "It's way more important to us that people like our music rather than our clothes or our haircuts or whatever. So much music nowadays is all about that stupid shit," he scoffs.

But with or without distorted faces, Circa Survive can't be underground rock's best- kept secret for long. They're certainly not going to stop touring anytime soon, and Juturna is steadily gaining momentum. Perhaps there's a way for Green and his bandmates to maintain some semblance of anonymity before they hit it big. "We're going to start wearing Slipknot masks on stage," he offers with a mischievous grin. Okay, maybe not.


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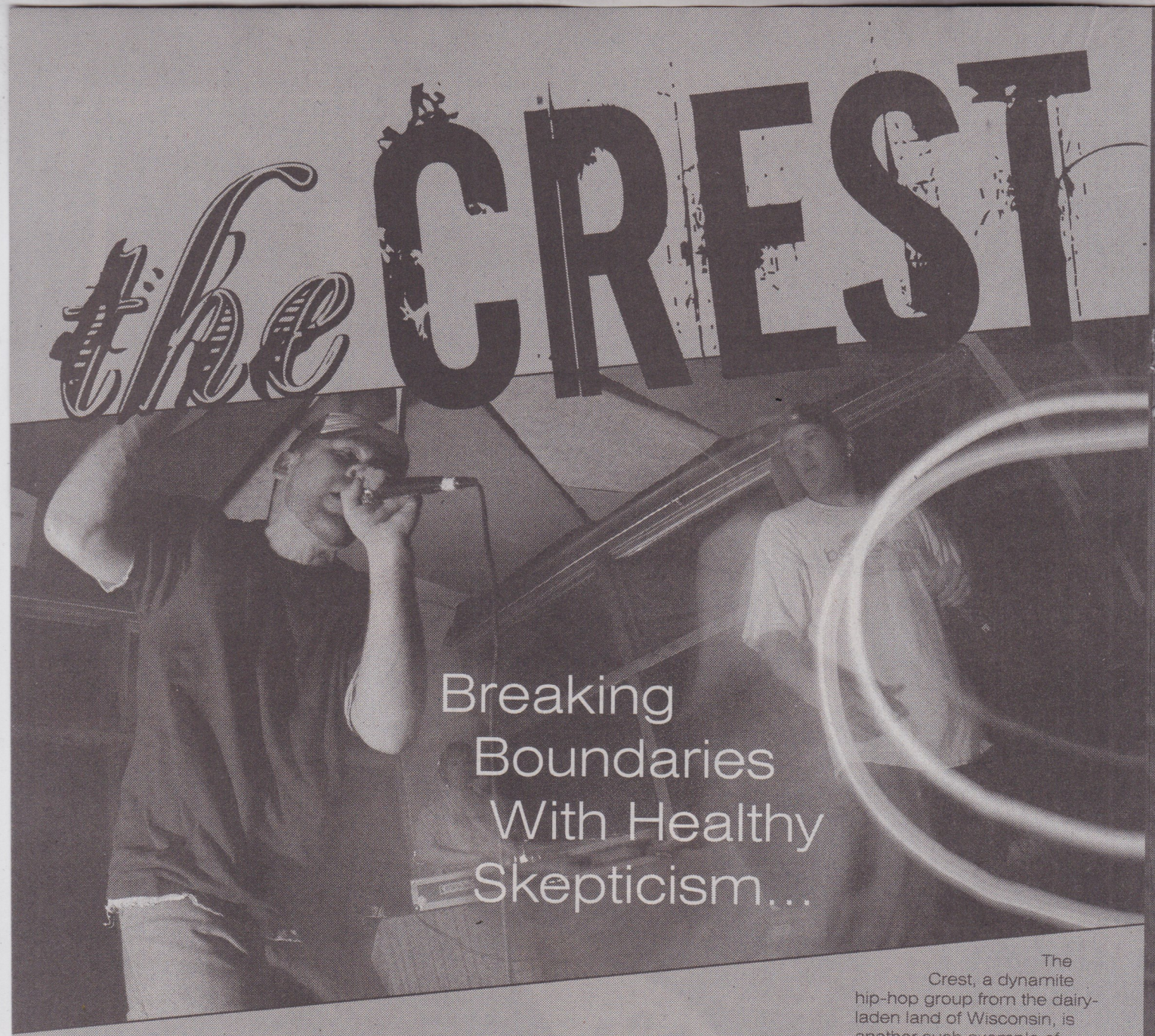
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Breaking Boundaries With Healthy Skepticism...

By Brian Peterson

Readers of AMP will obviously recognize that punk and hardcore tend to be the genres that get the most coverage in this magazine. AMP prides itself on being one of the prime publications for giving a wide amount of coverage to an array of both well-known and underground punk and hardcore bands currently taking the scene by storm. Once in a while, however, there are groups hailing from other genres that don't quite fit into the "punk" mold when it comes to sound, but they do fit when it comes to ethics, ideas and attitudes. For instance, many of the early hip-hop powerhouses – such as Public Enemy, KRS-ONE and Run D.M.C. – may have hailed from different musical backgrounds, but they all exuded the caustic and passionate spirit of the original punk movement, not to mention making a lot of 1980s punk and hardcore kids among their most dedicated fans.

The Crest, a dynamite hip-hop group from the dairy-laden land of Wisconsin, is another such example of having the aforementioned qualities. Comprised of four supremely talented emcees, deejays and producers – Jack Cracker, AD, DJ Skrabble, Jason Blair – The Crest is one of the most dynamic hip-hop acts to appear from the Midwest in quite some time. Utilizing their top-notch rhyming skills and penchant for creating unique rhythms and turntable riffs, these Madison natives have wowed both critics and audiences alike ever since their 1997 debut on the scene. The group has won the highly lauded John Lennon Imagine National Songwriting Competition four times and

has also been seen on the annual Warped Tour.
After years of creating independently produced releases and sparking interest in hip-hop heads from across the country, The Crest has just inked a deal with the California-based Uprising Records, which, in turn, will allow for the release of the most highly anticipated record from the group so far—Skeptik.
Just as Skeptik is about to launch, the four members of The Crest sat down to share their thoughts on the state of hip-hop, as well as share a little bit about their roots as a group. While The Crest may not play three-chord riffs or scream their throats raw, the collective intelligence, passion and energy coalesced by this outfit somehow seems akin with that of the most subversive punk or hardcore band.

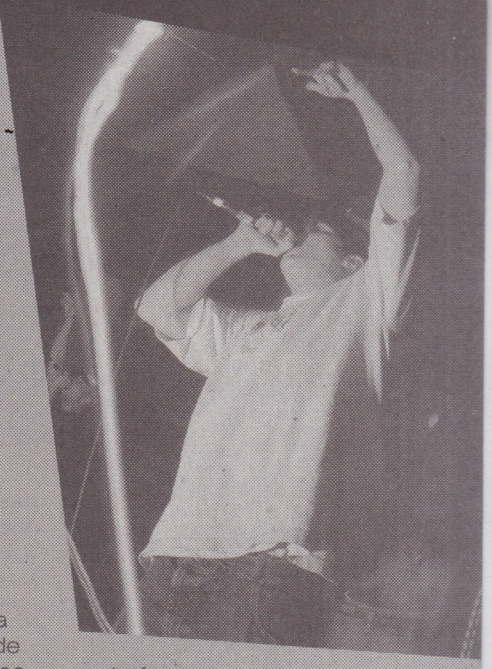
What got you guys originally interested in hip-hop?
Jack: In the very beginning it was break-dancing...in the summer of 1984 the movie "Breakin'" had just been released and we were all about it. I was 7 and AD was 4. The older kids up the street were breakin' all of the time and we just kind of got thrown into the mix. From there we just ate it up, the music, the dancing, and the style. I can remember the first time I heard anyone rap--it was Ice T. I bought the Chaka Khan single "I Feel for You" just so I could rewind Ice's part over and over. After that it was RUN- DMC, the Beastie Boys, Kool Moe Dee, KRS-ONE, NWA, 2 Live Crew, and the Ghetto Boys.
Skrabble: When I was a kid hip-hop was the only thing I listened to. I grew up on RUN-DMC, The Beastie Boys, LL Cool J and Public Enemy. Hip-hop had an attitude that most other music lacked. It was something new and different which made it very interesting to me.
JB: Hip-hop's great because it has no real musical boundaries, and there's still a lot of unexplored territory. Any existing style of music can be incorporated into hip hop. Shit, Bomb Squad was sampling Slayer way back in the 80's.

What gave you guys the confidence to actually be hip-hop artists as opposed to just fans?
Jack: I really didn't start to rhyme until I was in high school, and even then it was just sporadic little rhymes me and my friends used to make up dissin' each other or our girlfriends. After high school, I started free-styling at parties in college. Eventually, I bought a four track and started recording. AD on the other hand had been making beats and emceeing and making tapes well before that.
AD: I remember being around 10 or 11 years old and rapping into boom boxes and recording. I've always enjoyed the spotlight, so naturally I liked to hear my own voice.

How did The Crest come together? Did you know each other before the group was assembled?
Jack: Actually, AD and I are brothers. The Crest was loosely started in our parent's basement between 1993 and 1996. We had a mock studio set up in the basement back then and there were a handful of friends who used to come through and rap and what not. So, the name The Crest was just something we were throwing around back then. In 1997, I booked some studio time for my brother at a local spot. We got there and I ended up behind the mic as well. We pounded out seven songs in two hours, and when they asked us what we called ourselves we said The Crest.
JB: Me and Skrabble have worked on music together since we were in high school. We met up with Jack and AD through mutual friends about three years ago and it clicked.

What do you bring out of each other as artists in this group that you might not be able to achieve on your own?
Jack: We are used to working with each other, so it's easy to be creative and loose, though there is some healthy competition between us.
JB: Quality control.
AD: We're competitive. It's like running a race and the runner in the next lane has speed so you have to run faster. We both know the other is going to snap on the record, so that makes you dig deep as well.

"Any existing style of music can be incorporated into hip hop. Shit, Bomb Squad was sampling Slayer way back in the 80's."



What do you think of the overall hip-hop scene the past decade or so? Do you think it's gone too mainstream?
Jack: It's been amazing to see how much it's grown. Today, you've got so many different styles of hip-hop--it just keeps branching out and adapting to its surroundings. The culture is so versatile--it can thrive in any environment. As far as being too mainstream goes, anytime there's a lot of money to be made off something in America they're going to market the fuck out of it and package it up for mass consumption. But a decade ago there wasn't the "underground scene" that there is today, so there's give and take.
Skrabble: I like the blurring of the hip-hop edges that has occurred. Where hip-hop ends and where something else starts has become ambiguous, which helps eliminate fear of making artistic choices. It allows you to take more chances. I don't think hip-hop can go too mainstream. Mainstream means that the general public enjoys hip-hop. That's a good thing. Sure, there is a negative side to being mainstream--I don't care for commercials where the Keebler elves are rapping, but fuck it, if that's what it takes to open some doors at the bottom of the hip-hop food chain. You have to accept the evil along with the good.
AD: My favorite era of hip-hop is 1992 to 1994. This to me was the golden era. This was before everything had to be polished and shiny. Things have become more polished and shiny in the last decade.
JB: It is what it is. I'm not in the "We have to defend the sanctity of hip-hop" camp. If anything, with greater exposure comes greater potential as a cultural uniter. By the same token, I hate the bullshit co-opting of hip-hop culture by soulless marketing dickheads. Mountain Dew can fuck off! Most of the time it's shallow pandering, and it's vulgar. But it comes with the territory, for better or worse.

How are you guys able to channel some originality into this style of music?
Jack: Being from Madison, WI, we've had influences from all over the country, but at the same time we've been isolated enough from them to create our own sound.
Skrabble: Our musical influences probably have a wider range than most hip-hop artists. When some of the obscure, unusual influences

"(If) Bruce Springsteen wants to get all political or whatever, fine, he's obviously passionate about it. But when some dickhead starts accepting his words as the unmitigated truth, without ever seeking out or trying to understand an opposing viewpoint, well, that's ridiculous. But, that's on the dickhead, not The Boss."



come out in the music its going to sound original. If you're an emcee and your main influence is Jay-Z there is a certain amount of regurgitation that occurs. An emcee influenced by The Kinks will probably have a different spin on his style.

Who are some artists that have inspired you? How have they influenced your art/style?

Skrabble: Pubic Enemy, The Fugees, A Tribe Called Quest, Weezer, Prince Paul...

JB: Foremost would have to be Mike Patton. In terms of raw creativity, work ethic, and willingness to experiment he's pretty much unmatched, and I respect that. Beyond him there's RZA, David Bowie, Prince, Madlib, Blood Brothers, Melt-Banana; I appreciate eccentric shit that stakes out its own territory.

The underground hip-hop scene has grown quite a bit the past several years with the popularity of people like Aesop Rock, El-P and groups like Atmosphere, etc. Do you think people are ready for a rebirth of skills-based hip-hop on a larger level?

Jack: You know, I'm not a politician, so I don't pretend to know what the people are ready for. But what I do know is that I do what I do...we do what we do and it's like that. We make music that is fresh to us, period.

Skrabble: I don't think the average person cares about skills. Most people just want something they can dance to or rap along to in their car.

Why did you decide to work with Uprising Records, a label traditionally known for punk/hardcore sounds?

AD: The door has been opened for us by artists like Atmosphere, Eyedea and Abilities, and Sage Francis having success on Epitaph. Uprising saw us as inspiring Midwest artists and we saw them as people who know the independent music business. I think it is refreshing to work with a label that is not entirely "hip-hop."

Do you see any correlation between the punk/hardcore scenes and the underground hip-hop scene?

Jack: For sure, at least for me. It's all about "grinding" and doing it yourself. I mean we've self released ten albums; we've booked our own shows, done our own flyers, our own promotions, our own websites, negotiated our own contracts, done our own distribution, our clothing. And that's not to say we've never had any help, because we have, but we've done all of this at one time or another and the majority of it we are still doing today.

Skrabble: I've been telling people for years that punk and hip-hop are basically the same thing and everyone kept making crazy looking faces at me. Obviously, the music sounds different, but that's only the surface. If you look at the hip-hop and punk ideals and what the artists were trying do through their music, I think you would realize they are very similar.

JB: Yes, it's the D.I.Y. component. There's also the fact that the artist/audience divide is small in both cases. Everybody's a rapper/producer/punk band bassist, etc.

Do you think you are able to express yourself in a more unique way with hip-hop than, say, rock music?

Jack: Hell yeah, I can't sing and I can't play guitar or drums, this is all I got.

Skrabble: Hip-hop is a relatively new genre when compared to rock so being unique might be easier because there's more uncharted territory. Ultimately, the genre or media you choose is insignificant because none make it easier to express your self than any other.

AD: Hip-hop is the sound that I "feel." It is hard to describe in words, but any music I work on I will have a hip-hop influence on it.

What are some of the main concepts/themes behind the new record, which is called *Skeptik*?

Jack: Skepticism...taking a look around you...

AD: Our definition of Skeptik is that if you think you know the full truth about anything you are wrong. Every statement can be countered by its contradictory. This concept allowed us to express our feelings on topics such as the music scene, politics, dating, and the

war. These are concerns of ours and are reflected in the record.
JB: Eat a good breakfast and the world is yours.
Skrabble: Obviously, skepticism is a major theme. Questioning the status quo and trying to find your own truths.

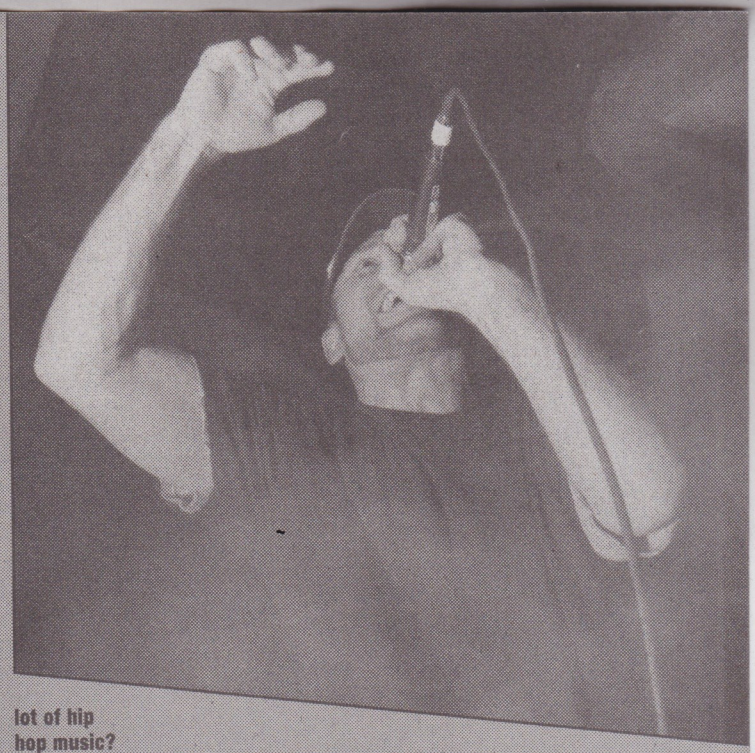
What do you hope to get across to people with the release of the new record?
AD: We would like to show people that you can rap about riddles and not be unintelligent. You can rap about politics and not be "political." We want to make in known that hip-hop is a vehicle for expression and should be used as such. We think about all types of things that are not on the average hip-hop release and this album reflects that.
JB: I just hope the hard work we put in shows. I mean, we did that record with Pro-Tools and a Mac in a tiny bedroom studio...no budget, from scratch. It was a massive amount of work for four people with day jobs.

Where do you see your sound going from this point forward?
Skrabble: I personally would like be more creative--more exploration of what's possible. Recently, hip-hop has gotten very cliché with both lyrical and musical content. It would be nice to step completely away from that. I'm sick of emcees bragging. I'm sick of the same tempo, break beats, and turn table riffs. Maybe I'll write some songs about bird watching or something you would never expect to here in hip-hop. Who knows? That might lead to some real shitty music, but the important thing is what you learn from the process of creating.
AD: We have been conducting experiments in the lab and have been making progress. We are wearing our hearts on our sleeves and will continue to be very passionate about our music. Music is one thing no one can take from you. You can take my shoes, my car, throw me in jail and I will still be able to freestyle for ten minutes straight. That's what it's all about.

You guys dig a little bit into social/political issues on the new album. Why did you feel it was important to touch on these things in your art?
Jack: To me it's like this...art is an expression of the self and that self just happens to be contained in a world of social strata's. You can't express yourself without touching on social issues. Politics are just the giant soap opera where these issues are played out for all to see.
Skrabble: We're into social and political issues so it's only natural for that to work its way into our music.

Do you think artists have an obligation to express their political points of view?
Jack: I think artists have an obligation to make art that's fueled by something higher than monetary gain... whether that's talking about politics or relationships. I personally don't like to listen to a bunch of generic "stop the war" bullshit, though. If you're going to be "political" you've got to have some insight for me, not just a few buzz words with a "Fuck Bush" thrown in for good measure. At the same time, if you look at hip-hop like an independent media source, it becomes inevitable that you would want to spread social/political awareness.
Skrabble: No artist has any obligation to do anything and every artist has their right to express anything.
JB: Some artist's feel they're obligated to, others feel obligated not to. As long the reaction is real, not opportunistic or shallow it's okay in my book. Really, it's the general public that should be under the microscope. Bruce Springsteen wants to get all political or whatever, fine, he's obviously passionate about it. But when some dickhead starts accepting his words as the unmitigated truth, without ever seeking out or trying to understand an opposing viewpoint, well, that's ridiculous. But, that's on the dickhead, not The Boss.

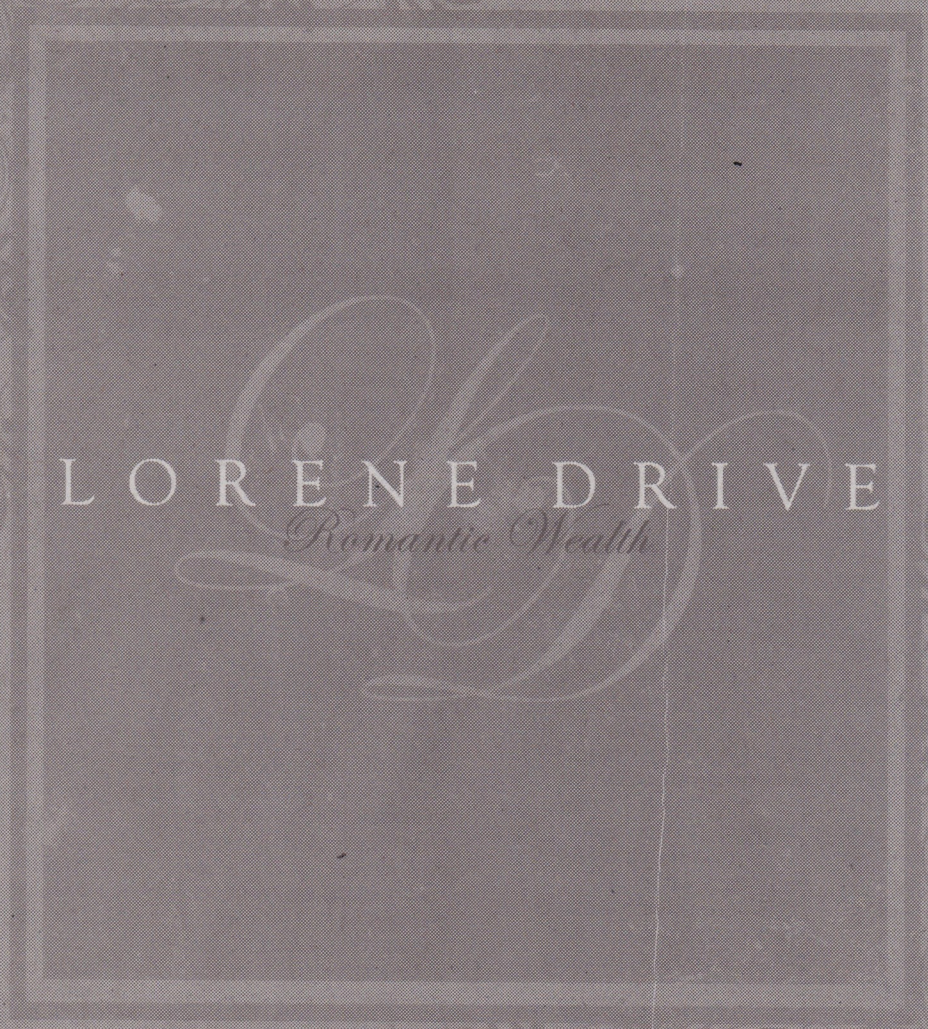
Hip-hop used to be a largely social/political force before the days of Sprite and McDonald's "rapping" ads. Why do you think these themes disappeared from a lot of hip hop music?



Jack: As hip-hop began to be assimilated into the American mainstream, corporations saw there was money to be made, and that's what they do best. To make money at that level you need to sell large amounts of whatever it is you're selling, and the best way to do that is to make your product appealing to as many people as possible. In this process, hip-hop got its sharp edges rounded off in order to be more palatable to the consumers at large or so to speak. On the other hand, hip-hop in its very nature is anti-establishment and this could all be looked at like the establishment keeping its friends close and it's enemies even closer.
Skrabble: There is a lot more hip-hop available then there used to be; it can't all be social/political. Some people just don't care for politics, so why would they rap about politics? But at the same time there is still plenty of social/political hip-hop being made. It might be harder to find than it used to be. Don't expect to turn on MTV see any. You might have to search for it, but its still there.
AD: Money, money, money. Being a rapper can be very tough to make money so rappers conform to be marketable. Coca-Cola owns both Sprite and McDonalds and the last thing they want in their ad is anything above a dumbed down rap for the kids. It is too controversial and may not reflect a popular opinion. Demand is shaping the supply. In this case, it is not the demand of the consumers, it is the demand of the companies that write checks and the rappers are the supply. The supply is very large right now and companies are demanding more acts like Fabulous than Michael Fronte these days. So, rappers go where the potential fame and fortune are.
JB: I assume you mean mainstream hip hop; in the underground you've got people like The Coup, Dead Prez, Mr. Lif, etc. Still, don't put the cart before the horse. Mainstream culture as a whole is sick. Empathy's in low demand. It's not hip hop's fault, but by being a medium of both personal and cultural expression, it's manifested there. I'd say that even mainstream hip-hop still is social and political, but in a way that might be uncomfortably revealing about the priorities of the general public.

Lastly, where can people find your record?
Jack: Anywhere from local mom and pop stores, to Hot Topic, FYE, Wherehouse, Tower, Best Buy, Strawberries, Coconuts, Streetside records and more.

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JESSE LUSCIOUS

July Entry:

YOUNG AND DUMB

This is a tough column to write because it's being written about a lot of disappointment and frustration I'm having with this thing of ours, this "punk" "scene." I'm trying my best not to sound bitter, because although I'm pissed and exasperated, I haven't given up on our thing, our cosa nostra. I think I'm partly writing this about my embarrassment for being connected with a scene that talks a great talk but can't pull its head out of its collective ass long enough to put its great ideals into action in the non-punk world.

I'll back up. Last year I ran a serious campaign for local office. 5-10 of my friends from the music world volunteered, and many more donated money or played fundraiser shows. Still, the majority of my volunteers were not from the extremely political punks with whom I have a long history. Of course, the national presidential race took precedence over every local race, so I'm not too surprised. This spring, I worked for another local campaign in Oakland. The candidate is a conscientious objector from the Persian Gulf War and she's been active as a teacher, a military counter-recruiter, and as a Green. All she needed was the musical background and she could've fit into any indie/underground music scene. Since there was no other high-profile political activity going on in the area during the campaign, I figured that I'd see some familiar faces volunteering to put an independent, intelligent, and fearless progressive onto Oakland's corrupt City Council. We even had some paying positions towards the end of the campaign that I offered specifically to the punk community.

Lonely Fool

You can guess who showed up from the punk scene. No one. It actually shocked me because there's tons of punks and political music fans who are happy to support electoral politics who I hang out with all of the time. A lot live in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. When we talk politics we all agree that local politics is the place where we can actually make honest-to-goodness change.

So where were we? The campaign had non-punks show up from as far away as San Diego and Sacramento (500 and 120 miles away, respectively), yet Oakland and Berkeley punks couldn't be bothered to ride their bike 5 minutes to put their time where their rhetoric was. We had things to do at all hours of the day and most nights, 7 days a week, so opportunity was not an issue. As I mentioned, there was even some "paid volunteer" positions ($40 for 4 hours of work in the early evening). Scheduling flexibility and financial incentives were freely available.

Paper Dolls

During the last series of People's Park riots (1990-1992: The Volleyball Years), there were only two other members of the punk scene who I knew I'd see at most demos for the park. I shouldn't be surprised that the same strain of self-indulgent laziness- oh yeah, "nihilism" or "apathy"- survives in today's music scene. It's still annoying as all hell, especially after all of the sound and fury about last year's national election.

15 years ago, I chalked it up to people having different opinions about People's Park, but with this latest example of punk "apathy" I think it's something more. We've always been an insular scene, very concerned with creating our own reality/punktopia and denying the authority of the outside world over our hopes and dreams (and musical output!). I think this insularity, crossed with a world that's more and more about instant gratification uber alles, gives us exciting radical and progressive events that include zero members of the local radical and progressive music scene.

Caught In A Dream

We have to ask ourselves- do we really give a fuck about imperialism or gentrification when it doesn't threaten something right in front of our faces like 924 Gilman or ABC No Rio? When I write about voting with my wallet- shopping at independent stores, not eating meat- I mean it. Do you? Are the lyrics tattooed on the inside of your skull just aural wallpaper or do they have meaning in your life? If the latter, prove it.

Talk the talk, walk the walk. The kids united, will never be divided. Or, closer to home, unity, unity, you've heard it all before, this time it's not exclusive we want to stop a war. Unity as one, stand together unity evolution's gonna come!

I wouldn't expect some L-7 normal to stand up for what s/he believes in, since they aren't self-defined as do-it-yourselfers or as independent thinkers. I do expect at least a few of the crowd chanting political slogans at the local punk show to stand up. College graduates, school teachers, engineers, alcoholics, professionals, blue collar workers, all are part of the punk scene. None could tear themselves away from their colored vinyl and debates about $5 doors to work with people who think Black Flag is a bug spray and that the Ramones work at the bodega down the block. The squares showed up, with varying levels of political understanding. Where were all of the vegan political warriors who can quote Kent McClard and Dick Lucas by heart? The squares clearly had the right idea- volunteering for an honest grassroots candidate who isn't a corrupt pawn of the system.

Surprise Surprise

So I'm not bitter. I'm still slightly surprised but more realistic about my "scene." There's a lot of big talkers and very very few doers. Pretty fucking pathetic for a scene that claims to "do it yourself."

I'm not bitter. I'm optimistic in the face of my friends apathy that this will change soon. We don't have a choice. Eldridge Cleaver said it best: "You are either part of the solution or part of the problem." Come on down next time, it's a blast realizing that the normal looking people agree with your funny-haired self, and even better, that working together you can actually kick some big-money, fascist-wannabe ass when you bother to show up.

Turbohund East Bay, ruff!

Product placement- The Frisk are proud to have donated an unreleased tune to the "Rock Against Bush Vol. 1" compilation on Fat Wreck. We've got a track from "Audio Ransom Note" on the latest Amoeba Records compilation. There's also a live acoustic version of "Leech" (on the just released "This Just In" benefit compilation for Indymedia on GC Records. There'll be information about these releases as well as upcoming Frisk shows very soon (maybe even by the time this is printed) so check our site at www.thefrisk.com today!

August Entry:

BERKELEY HEATHEN SCUM - "A CORPSE HAS NO RIGHTS.

If you are a corpse, they can take your picture from a hundred unflattering angles as you stare up unseeingly at the popping flash guns, your skirt pulled back to reveal the dried and caked blood on the inside of your thighs and legs, the last flies of summer swarming about your open mouth. They can press their thumbs into your eyes at last to close your lids, and they can pull your skirt down over your knees and mark the position of your body... They can roll you onto a stretcher and carry you down to the waiting ambulance, the stretcher bouncing as they move along; they are not concerned for your comfort- you are beyond feeling. They can put the stretcher down on the floor of the ambulance with a sudden jolt and then cover you with a

JESSE LUSCIOUS

sheet- your waist, your young breasts, your throat, your face. You have no rights.

If you are a corpse, they can take off your clothing and put it into a plastic bag, and tag it, and send it to the police laboratory. They can place your cold and naked body on a stainless-steel table and dissect you in search of a cause of death. You have no rights. You are a corpse, a stiff, a container of clues perhaps, but no longer a person; you have forfeited your rights- forfeited them to death.

If you are a junkie, you have more rights than a corpse- but not many more.

You can still walk and breathe and sleep and laugh and cry- which is something. These things are life- they are not things to be discounted- and you can still do these things. But if you are a junkie you are involved in your own brand of living death, and you are not very much better off than a bona fide corpse. Your death is continuous and persistent. It starts every morning when you wake up and take that first shot, and it continues throughout the day-long hustle for heroin, punctuated by the other death-giving shots, on through the night and into another morning, over and over again, you're a record player spinning the same tired mournful dirge, and the needle is stuck- in your arm. You know you're dead, and everyone else knows it, too."

[pp 131-2, Lady Lady I Did It, Ed McBain, 1961]

With Friends Like You

I'm not reprinting a 44 year old quote because yet another person I know died from heroin- this time the trigger's an anecdote told to me about a heroin fatality 15 years ago. That dead person knew better and shot up anyway, and that phrase- 'knew better and shot up anyway'- fits most of the addicts I've known and mourned over the years. People who saw what the addicts before them went through- the lying, the stealing, the infections, the deaths- and went ahead and did it anyway. "It won't happen to me, I'm different, my name is [fill in the blank]!" Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

Fucking pathetic.

Landshark

On the plus side, it's great to see underground people launch new projects. Axis Records, run by Joe Franke of Fracas, has (re)settled into a nice roomy spot in East Oakland between 880 and Alameda. Another one, Earwitness Records, is a somewhat cramped 2 story record store on a nice shopping street in Oakland run by a founding member of Turbojugend East Bay. Both are completely independent, and Earwitness is so far off of the radar for the major chains that they consider Amoeba as the biggest retail threat to their survival.

Due to a ton of nasty economic facts- including predatory pricing/bulk purchasing by the major chains- it's tough to survive as a mom-and-pop record store in any area. It's worse to be one in a place like the SF Bay Area, which has two stellar locally owned indepent chains (Amoeba and Rasputin's) and a ton of established specialty shops. Still, both stores are making a good go of it but need consistent business to stay afloat. Check 'em out, it's a way that you can exercise your d.i.y. ethics in the name of punk fucking rock. Or electro. Or country. Or hip hop.

Axis Records & Comics
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Earwitness Music
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The Money Will Roll Right In

Here's some great new music releases: Chickenhead/Los Canadians "Mutiny in Miami" (Scam), M.I.A. "Arular", Alkaline Trio "Crimson", Knights of the New Crusade "My God Is Alive! Sorry About Yours!" (Crusade Now), Whiskey Sunday "Maldecido" (1-2-3-4-Go!), David Dondero "Live At The Hemlock" (Future Farmer), Street Dogs "Back to the World" (Brass Tacks), Fannypack "See You Next Tuesday," Brain Failure "American Dreamer" (Thorp), V/A "Slam Bush" (Hard Knock), Blowfly "Fahrenheit 69" (Alternative Tentacles), and The Transplants "Haunted Cities."

I've tried to feature only new releases in this column because to talk about older stuff that's rockin' my world would get waaay too long and involved, but screw it. Here's five older releases that you should strongly consider checking out if you haven't already.

Cui Jian "Chinese Rock The Beginning 1986-1998" is probably the most obscure- unless you're from mainland China. This 2 cd set covers a decade plus of the godfather of Chinese Rock- think if Chuck Berry and The Boss were combined with Kurt Cobain and you'll get an idea of the influence and stature of Cui Jian. He's not particularly current from what I can tell, and his blend of western pop with Chinese twists and lyrics isn't groundbreaking to my western pop culture ears. It is quirky and pleasant, and his wild story completes the picture. He was in favor with the Chinese dictatorship until his tune "Rocknroll on the New Long March" became the theme song of the 1989 Tiananmen Square uprising/massacre. After that he was not a favorite of the government and faded from official view. He still tours the world, and sold out the Fillmore (2000 seat venue in San Francisco) in 2004 with minimal advertising.

Rubber City Rebels "The Hollywood Years (1979-1984)" is a Japanese import available through Smog Veil. Fucking great proto-power-punk-pop yadda yadda, don't sleep on this. Also, check out their great return to form, the fully punk "Pierce My Brain" from 2003 also on Smog Veil.

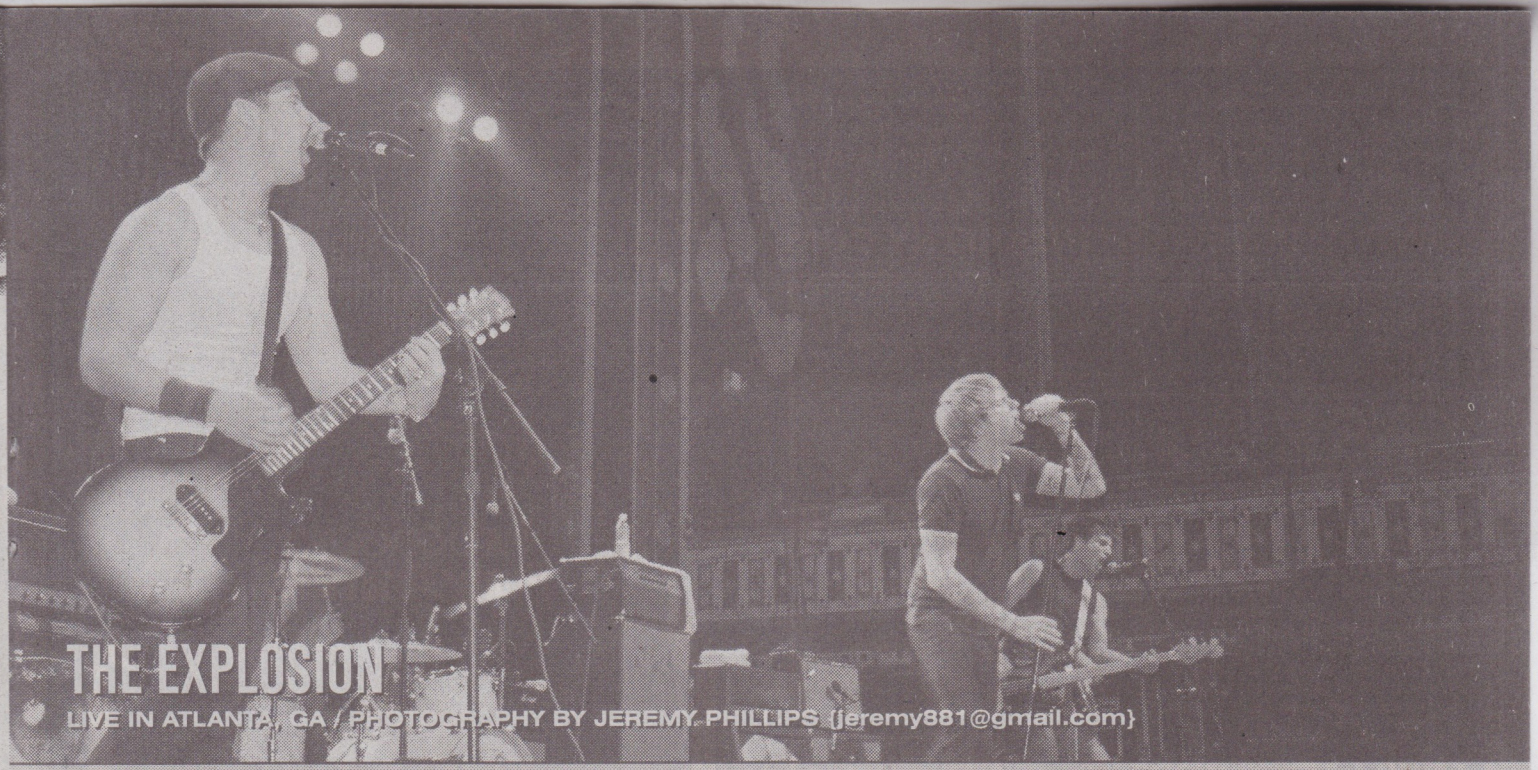
The last 3 of the older releases should be no-brainers. If you want to do research on them before buying, fine, but maybe you should just trust me, alright? The Ruts "The Peel Sessions" (Strange Fruit)- should be subtitled "All their great songs from 'The Crack' plus some others that also rock. Devo ""Live- The Warner Bros. Music Show"- this is the cd version of the 1980 12" EP which Rhino released in limited quantities a few years ago. It features almost an entire 1980 show from these spuds with absolutely great performances and spotless sound. Somehow, this is back in stock @ Rhino, so if you missed it the first time around like me... MC5 "Back In The USA"- Less trippy and jammy than other MC5 studio records, this features the incomparable "American Ruse"- you know, the second best song they ever did!

Finally, Here's 4 releases I'm looking forward to hearing but haven't yet- Turbonegro "Party Animals" Soviettes "LPIII" Gravy Train "Are You Wigglin?" and Electric Six "Senor Smoke." Maybe by next column...

Turbohund East Bay, ruff!

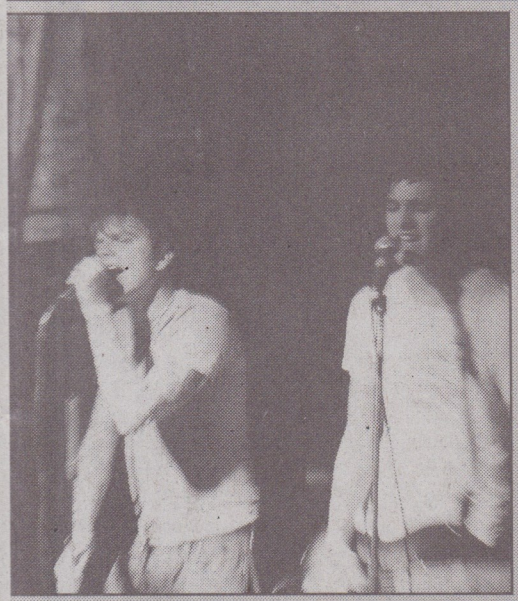
Product placement- The Frisk donated a live acoustic version of "Leech" on the just released "This Just In" benefit compilation for Indymedia on GC Records. It's nowhere near as dodgy as it sounds, really. I'm really skittish about that kind of stuff but I'm stoked on it! The Frisk are proud to have donated an unreleased tune to the "Rock Against Bush Vol. 1" compilation on Fat Wreck. We've got a track from "Audio Ransom Note" on the latest Amoeba Records compilation. There'll be information about these releases as well as upcoming Frisk shows very soon (maybe even by the time this is printed) so check our site at www.thefrisk.com today!

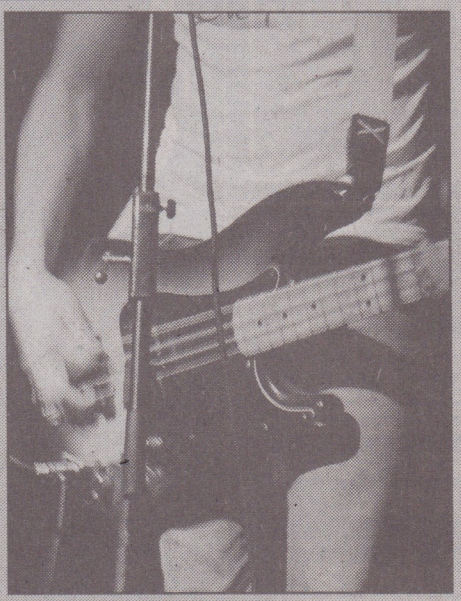
Stay strong, stay true, and always read between the lines! -Jesse Luscious



THE EXPLOSION

LIVE IN ATLANTA, GA / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEREMY PHILLIPS {jeremy881@gmail.com}











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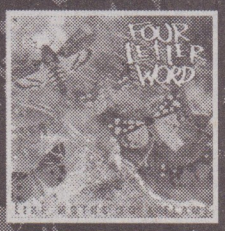
FORMER CELL MATES
"Hustle" CD

The FORMER CELL MATES feature members of LEATHERFACE, THE GOLDEN VIRGINS and THE COYOTE MEN. Think of an immense north of England version of TURBONEGRO, THIN LIZZY, LEATHERFACE, THE POLICE and even LUCERO all rolled into one! HOLY SHIT!!!



BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT
"Godzilla Tripwire" CD

"Ex-PANTHRO UK UNITED 13 dude pulls together 15 tracks of gritty, suitably deranged punk rock. With the emphasis on the rock. This reminds me a lot of the glories of UNITAS, or grubby TURBONEGRO married to NAKED RAYGUN's edgy melody. Plus a dash of ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT, minus the horns. Real great stuff" - AMP, last issue!



FOUR LETTER WORD
"Like Moths To a Flame" CD

"FOUR LETTER WORD still have that powerful, LEATHERFACE-esque guitar sound and Welly's vocals are still as powerful and as melodic as Jake Burns' without sounding at all like them. Quite why FOUR LETTER WORD aren't one of the most famous and well-loved punk bands in the world I'll never know... This really is the total package" - DFBPunk (RIP)

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Backbeat

punk rock video magazine vol. 1

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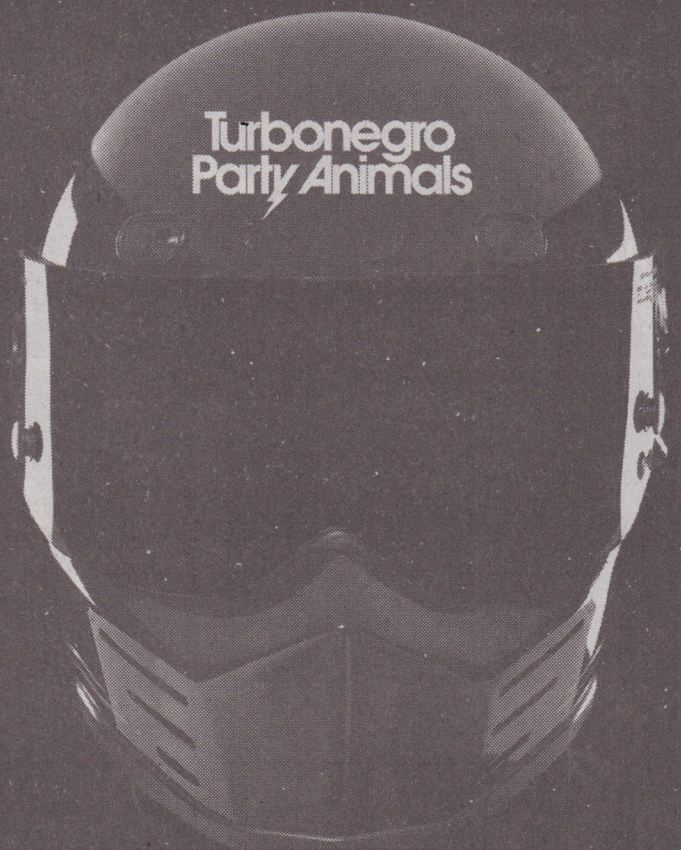
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ON THE ROAD AGAIN:
FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES TOUR DIARY

This month Benjamin Perri of From Autumn To Ashes tours on Sounds of the Underground...His diary...a bit unconventional...but so was the tour.





STRANGER THAN FACT

So, the world has Warped Tour and Ozzfest. The Sounds of the Underground, in its first year of existence, is billed as a middle ground, for fans of both fests and for kids with open minds. This is how we went into it, with this mentality. Our band has a hard time trying to find its niche in a certain scene. We jump back and forth because we just feel most comfortable playing for all sorts of people, so this tour made sense for us. A few of the bands on the tour had the same kind of predicament, so it made for a rather interesting tour...

Day one of the tour ran very well considering it was the first day of the inaugural run of the tour. Everything had been carefully planned out and accounted for and it ran without a hitch. It was hot outside and cold inside due to the fact the stage was on top of a ice rink, so that was a welcome reprieve for everyone from the heat. I got to see EVERY TIME I DIE and GWAR and POISON THE WELL, all of which had a really good showing. Our set was a lot of fun and we got the crowd goin for the most part, but the trend that will develop over the days, is the anticipation of LAMB OF GOD.

That night was misery for all of us. The shitty mini bus/shuttle bus we were in was the most uncomfortable ride this side of a Yugo! When it hit a bump it felt like you were getting body slammed by Hulk Hogan and the AC was nonexistent. We made the decision to get a full size bus after Philly. We arrive in Philly and it is time to drink. Got pretty hammered pretty early only to find out that we were playing directly before LOG tonight. I ran myself into the ground by 5o clock and parked my ass in the sweltering hot mini bus to relax before the set. I was not in good shape. The heat plus the alcohol had put me down for the count. I rested as much as I could and before I knew it, our time to play was on. The set was really good and we played even better and after the first song I felt amazing, which is strange considering that I felt like hell a few minutes before. So, we get done and say goodnight and before I could even get the words "thank you good night" out, a LOG chant had started...at least they had the decency to wait til we were done!

The next day was a day off for us and we were meeting a new bus in Columbus, OH. Parked in some random mall parking lot that made me feel like I was actually in "Dawn of the Dead". A few us went into the dollar movie theatre and caught "House Of Wax" ... which was terrible besides Paris Hilton getting impaled "HOT!"

The bus was super late, I mean 7 hours late, so we got a hotel and grabbed some showers, which I needed cause I hadn't taken one in about 6 days. After that, storm clouds rolled in... a precursor of things to come I think. The bus finally shows up around midnight...10 hours later than it was supposed to and the AC on the fucking bus is out! Another night of struggling with heat and trying to sleep. At this time, I am going on about 5 hours of sleep in three days.

Rockstars you say?? PFFFT! This is all involuntary! I would sleep for days if you'd let me!!

Drive to Michigan and play a good show and am bothered by this one mullet headed kid in the crowd. The whole set he is yelling "you suck!" and giving me the finger and just being a jerk. And of course, I can't let it be, I have to get reeled in and take some verbal shots at the guy. I doubt he had any idea what I was saying, I used too many big words. Later on in the night, a thunderstorm rolled in and I was standing under our tent with the guys from ETID next to me under theirs. This storm brought some hellish wind with it and it picked up ETID's tent and hurtled it across the parking lot and smashed it to bits! I just caught mine with some help of one of the guys from GWAR. I had the slightest hold of it and it started to get away from me when dude caught it in mid air and hauled it in for me...saving the day and the tent. That night, the AC got fixed and I sat down and caught up on the HBO show Entourage.

The next day was off day show in Loiusville KY. It was a great show and we had a lot of fun! The only thing to report here is our bus AC broke yet again!!! Another day in sweltering heat...at this point you have to question if our tour is doomed! The bus company is sending us another bus until they can fix this one! Someone help me...please.

The next few days for us were a big blur...I would sleep most of the time, wake up and play and go back to sleep. At this point, none of us had slept very much and the bus catastrophes got worse and worse, and we couldn't enjoy ourselves at all. The only good thing that came out of the next few days was seeing my good friend Adam from TAKING BACK SUNDAY'S father. We toured with TBS about 4 years ago and got to meet him and he took us into his house and fed us and ever since has followed our careers as much as he has his sons. So, when we come to town he knows it and shows up to say hello and hang out. It means a lot when you have people like that in your life...to take all the shitty things and put them to the side for just a little bit and show you there is good out there.

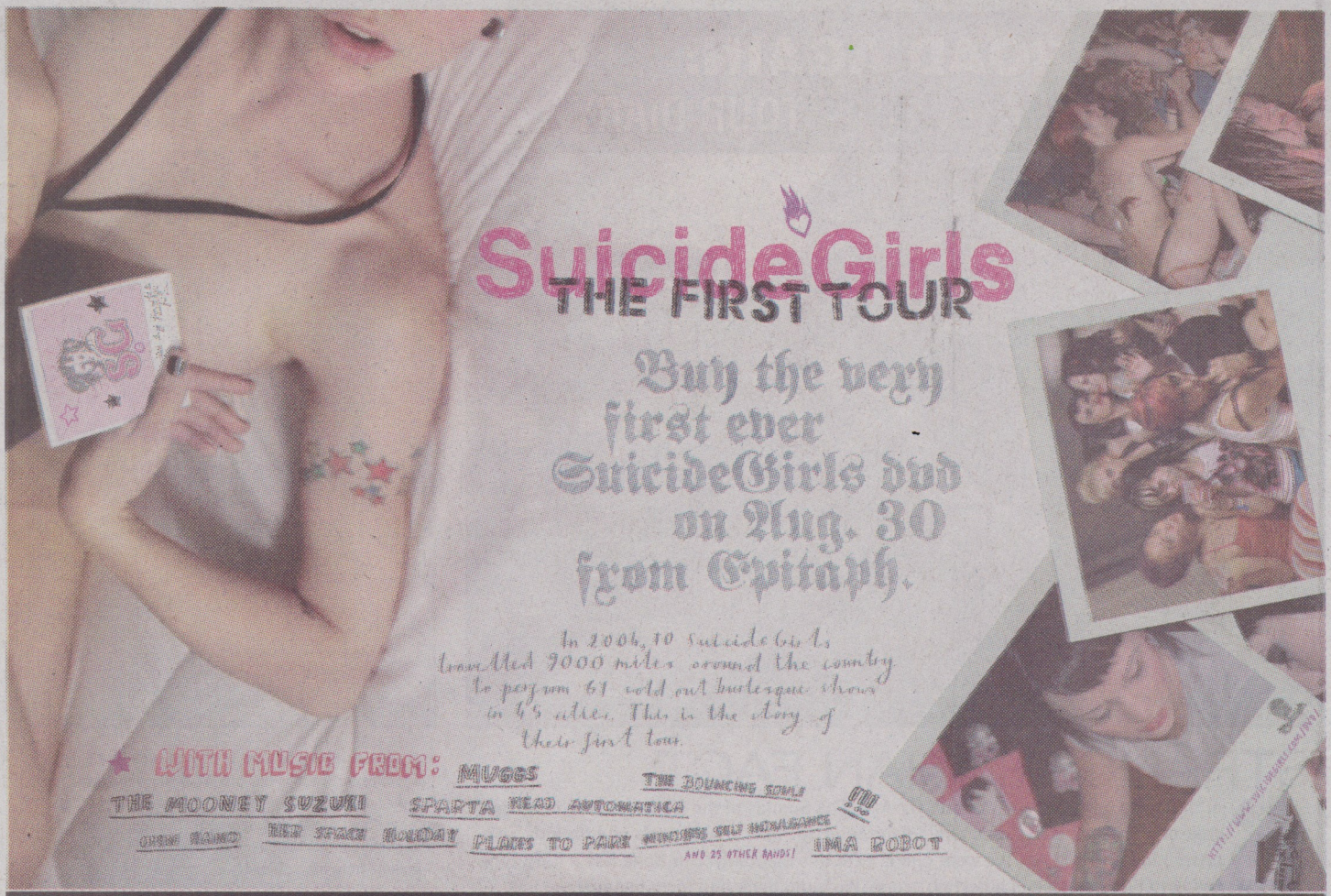
That night was fun...all the bands were hangin out together telling stories, playing music, drinking.....Randy from LOG told me that one of the undercover cops at the venue was dressed as a metal kid and was wearing our t-shirt. Brian and Ken fro UNEARTH were playing music behind the bus and everyone got pretty liquored up!

And the next few days blurred into one.

Then, to close out the week, we were in NJ. This is a big family reunion for us. All of our friends and families come out, the security at Starland are all personal friends of ours, and it's always a big ol' party. And, yes it was.

We played the show and it was one of the best performances I had personally in a long time. We were full of energy, the crowd was feeling it and the songs just flowed...they came out organically, like without thought. The last song is done and Josh, who is a pro at this, smashes all of his shit!! Cabinet included!!!! And, this is a shock...BRIAN smashes his new guitar as well!!!

—Benjammin



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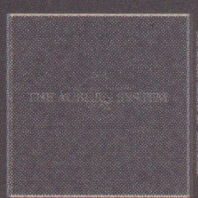




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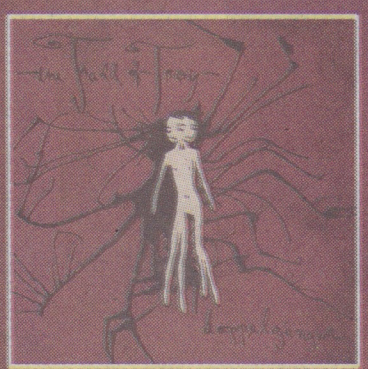
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RAPID FIRE

SHORT INTERVIEWS FOR SHORT ATTENTION SPANS



Profile: Die Alone
Name: Michael Adler
Position in the Band: Guitarist
Hometown: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Crash And Burn sounds like: Immolation / Morbid Angel / Red Chord / Guns n' Roses We're a metal band with an attitude problem.
Our label, Corrosive Recordings is cool because: They're pushing the boundaries of metal and hardcore by pushing bands that are looking to do something different.
Four CD's that are influencing me the most right now are:
Guns N' Roses - Appetite For Destruction
Bodies In The Gears Of The Apparatus / Despised Icon – Split
Resurrection - Embalmed Existence
Rune - The End Of Nothing
Best thing to do in the van is: Inhale gas fumes.**Worst driving incident involved:** Chicago. Everything about Chicago.
My city has influenced my music how? We grew up with the Milwaukee Metalfest in our backyards, so that was what we grew up with. Once that turned into a joke, the hardcore scene was, ironically, playing better metal than the meathead death metal guys. But now, a few years later, everyone seems to have forgotten where they've come from and how things have evolved. Die Alone is a history lesson for anyone who wasn't through all of that here in Milwaukee.
The kids these days are: Bought and sold. There are so many marketing gimmick bands being propped up by kids just trying to fit in that things have become bland and boring. Metal bands and hardcore bands should be angry, ugly, and violent. That's why we're not playing jangly pop songs. Every metal band with clean, pretty vocals should retire. Napalm Death and The Cro-Mags should be required listening for anyone wanting to be involved in either genre.
Pistons or Pacers, or don't you care? The Brewers.
Nine Inch Nails or Van Halen? Van Halen, with David Lee Roth.
Canada or Japan? Canada.
When we're not on tour we earn our living by: I manage a pizza restaurant. I wear a Rolling Stones tie to work.
Upcoming tours or releases: The Arcane Suicide Movement, our first full length, is out now. We're touring with Psyopus and The Tony Danza Tap Dance Extravaganza in August and we'll be bouncing around the Midwest in the meantime playing with Arsis, Psyopus, Light This City and Ion Dissonance.
Best Bad Religion disc? Minor Threat - Discography
Favorite thing about playing shows? Watching Metalcore kids not get it and scraping the skin of my fingers off on my guitar strings.
Band that still gives me the chills when I see them live: Hypocrisy and Wings Of Scarlet
Web info:
www.diealone.com
www.corrosiverecordings.com



NOAM CHOMSKY
THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY CD

It's Noam Chomsky vs. the Bush Regime in this much-anticipated spoken-word release. Recorded just after the reelection of George W Bush, Chomsky pinpoints the principle commitments of the current administration. A lively chronicle of the systematic power plays which have effectively wrenched power from citizens' hands and made the world an increasingly unstable place to inhabit.



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HIRETUSKAN
END STATES CD

10 songs of manic, shredding, emotional and introspective hardcore that will leave your ears bleeding and your bladder empty. Not to mention leaving Michelle's throat a fucking mess.



For more on why we can't wait for the end, see www.g7welcomingcommittee.com. Uncooperative since 1997.

G7 WELCOMING COMMITTEE



BOLD
LOOKING BACK

By Brian Peterson

Think back, if you will, to seventh grade. What are the first memories that flood into your mind? Many would concur that this socially awkward time not only provided for some carefree times, but also a lot of worries—whether it was agonizing over haircuts, jeans or the opposite sex.

The fellows from the legendary hardcore band Bold, however, had different priorities during their middle school salad days—namely, playing in a raucous straightedge hardcore band that was as equally potent as many of their contemporaries who were several years older.

Bold, originally called Crippled Youth, was one of the early batch of "youth crew" bands – Youth of Today, Gorilla Biscuits and Judge among them – who spread the gospel of straightedge like wildfire not only in the legendary New York hardcore scene, but also to other remote areas across the country, as well. They inspired many with their positive anthems and really turned heads with the recording of their final songs now known as the Looking Back recordings. In roughly four years of existence, these youngsters managed to not only affirm a notable slot in the history of hardcore, but they also grew into ambitious students and artists, many of whom went on to play in other renowned musical projects—Quicksand, Into Another and Handsome among them.

Now, as 2005 is kicking into high gear, the ex-members of Bold are back to not only play some "reunion" shows, but have full intentions to write and record another full-length record.

While some might be skeptical of the band's motivations, what sticks out is Bold's penchant for positivity. Recently, vocalist Matt Warnke and guitarist Tom Capone shared some time on the eve of their first comeback gig to reminisce about the history of their influential band. Although there is much to be said about their previous landmark work, it's exciting to see that Bold is back and eager to add to its influential legacy.

So, without further ado, let's let Warnke and Capone to get to the business of "looking back."

You guys were called Crippled Youth originally. Why did you choose Crippled Youth for your band name? Was this a reflection of your outlook on your upbringing or society?

Matt Warnke: Keep in mind that when we picked that name for our band we were about 12 or 13 years old. [laughs] We were reading Maximum Rock N'Roll and just starting to go to shows and it was just a name that popped into my head and it sounded like a hardcore band name. It didn't really have too much deeper meaning; we had fairly normal upbringings. It basically just sounded like a good name for a band. [laughs] There were a lot of "youth" bands at the time—Youth Brigade, Youth of Today, Wasted Youth. Crippled Youth, I guess, fit into that realm.

You guys started Crippled Youth when you were in junior high or so, right? What influenced you guys to put together a hardcore band at such a young age?

Warnke: Yeah, I was in seventh grade when we started the band. It's funny

because I was sort of ahead of curve when I was eight or nine or ten. I was the youngest of seven kids, and I was exposed to The Clash, Elvis Costello and The Pretenders, not to mention rock bands like The Rolling Stones. Then I heard the Sex Pistols and it just hooked me. From there, Drew Thomas – our drummer - and I just got deeper and deeper into this kind of music. I went to John Jay Junior High, which was located on the lower campus at the high school. At that time, John Porcelly and some of the other members of Youth of Today went to high school there, so we would see Violent Children fliers around the school. We tried to immerse ourselves in music and loved it at such a young age. We just decided, "Hey, we can do this."

What were the biggest inspirations for you when you first started playing?
Warnke: We had basically a crash course in hardcore. [laughs] We went from being into the Sex Pistols to hardcore bands like Agnostic Front and Minor Threat. Then we played our first show at The Anthrax and that's when we met the guys from Youth of Today. They pretty much took us under their wing and thought it was cool that little kids from their hometown were playing this kind of music. They hung out with us and shared their record collection so we could check out more stuff. That was obviously a huge factor into the shaping of our band.

Were they surprised to see such young kids playing that kind of music?
Warnke: Yeah, I think they were. A lot of the old Connecticut scene, even aside from Youth of Today, got into us. Everyone really dug what we were doing. The novelty factor of us being kids may have played a big part of it, but everyone was very supportive.

Being so young in the New York hardcore scene, were you ever intimidated by the violence that went on? How did you guys deal with that?
Warnke: I would be lying if I said I wasn't...especially the first couple of times I went to CBGB's. At CB's you had to be 16 to get in, so before I turned 16 I would have to sneak in or eventually I got a fake I.D. And after hearing all these old violent stories the guys from Youth of Today would tell us it was a bit intimidating. But that was also a part of the attraction in a way—to blend in and be accepted...go to the show and take it all in. It was empowering. The dangerousness was part of the thrill, I guess.

What gave you guys the confidence to get up there on the stage at such a young age and "speak out" to people?
Warnke: I think it was just that we were so young and so brash and we looked up to a lot of these older bands and wanted to be respected by them. Anytime you perform you are taking a risk at failing, but that's part of the experience. People can tell when you are genuine and sincere and I think that came across with us. We basically had the idea of sink or swim and it just felt natural to us.

I've never actually heard the Crippled Youth, *Join the Fight* seven-inch. How did that release come about?
Warnke: Join the Fight was recorded in 1985, so it wasn't that long into the band's existence. We played some shows out west and gave some of our demos to 7 Seconds and their label, Positive Force. They took the demo out on the road with them and it sort of helped build up a buzz. This label from the Bay Area loved it and wanted to put it out as a seven inch, as well as the Underdog demo. I think there were only about 4,000 copies pressed of it and it's become kind of a collectible record. I actually hadn't listened to it in a long time until recently and I think it stands up pretty well. It's funny because I sound like I'm 13 years old, but it's really pure sounding, with some rather black and white straightedge lyrics. [laughs] It was actually kind of militant; of course, when you get older



you realize that you shouldn't shove ideas down people's throats, but at the time I guess we had the arrogance of youth speaking when we wrote those lyrics.

How did you guys originally get into straightedge? What was so appealing about it for you?

Warnke: We got into straightedge because Youth of Today took us under their wing and they were straightedge and they were like, "This is how we are. This is an ideology that rejects all of the things society deems are acceptable, which are things that can become obsessions for people." For us, they were a big influence on us, but at the same time when you're that young we were looking for something to distinguish us from our peers in high school. We decided to adopt the ideology. We need to rethink how people approach life. We were also kids and we had kind of a black and white view of it, but as we grew up our opinions on straightedge took more of an approach of, "If you want to be straightedge that's great, but if someone doesn't want to be that's cool." It was about trying to be a good person; the best person you can be and be positive.

Capone: I never used drugs or drank or smoke when I was young, but I never wore X's on my hand and never called myself straightedge. My band Beyond was all "straight" but we didn't want to label ourselves as straightedge...I wanted to think beyond that, which is kind of the point of the name of that band's name...like being "beyond" labels. But what prompted it was that in the early 80s I was into the thrash and black metal scene and liked bands like Venom, Metallica and Celtic Frost. I did an underground zine called Mutilator with Bathory on the cover when I was about 16. The metal scene was cool, but I got sick of some of the people. Eventually I became "straight" on my own. Then out of nowhere in 1985 I was into metal and hardcore and then Youth of Today came about and created a new straightedge scene, which was perfect for me. I had just lost my loser, drug-addict friends; I wasn't into that and I was hanging out by myself and playing guitar and here comes this new era of hardcore. From that influence I created Beyond.

Many people have seen straightedge as "trendy" or "cliquish" over the years. Would you agree or disagree with this assessment?

Warnke: It depends on the person. I certainly know people who have been straightedge for like 15 years and it's a very personal thing for them. For others it is a trend; they might be searching for their identity or something...it's like religion kind of in that it can either be a personal thing between a person and his or her spiritual entity, or it can be a way of putting up walls and pretending you're better than everyone. Straightedge, in and of itself, is a great thing; it's a healthy way of life and it's good to move away from these things that can mess up your life and consume you. But, again, it differs from person to person: it can be good or people can use it as an excuse for violence or whatever.

Capone: I think I lost interest after Bold broke up. Then when Quicksand started we wanted to go in another direction, which was away from the hardcore scene. A lot of straightedge people became very trendy and elitist; there was also a lot of violence in that scene. It became a negative scene and plus I was just growing as a musician and as a person.

Why did you change your name to Bold? Was this an attitude or mindset change?

Warnke: We realized we had a generic sounding name. [laughs] In the beginning Crippled Youth is what we wanted because it sounded hardcore...but then we realized it sounded too much like other band names. We wanted a more original sounding name, basically.

What do you think separated you guys from the slew of other "youth crew" straightedge bands from the late 80s?

Warnke: Well, there were a lot of great bands from that time. I think a lot of us were



on the same level. People had different favorites. But at the same time, we had the same line-up pretty much the whole time. We were the best of friends so that was the basis of it and it helped us become a close knit group. Also, I think we were in the right place at the right time in a lot of ways. It was magical, in a way. In a short amount of time we progressed quite a bit as a group...from Crippled Youth to the Speak Out era to the Looking Back era.
Capone: I think it was unique how Crippled Youth came out at 13 years old and were way ahead of the curve with straightedge along with Youth of Today. I thought this band was very important in developing the New York hardcore sound. But I think when we got to Looking Back...that's what separated us. We totally did something that doesn't sound like anyone else still to this day. I think that's what we're proudest of. It wasn't the typical record. Before that we had been playing typical, generic hardcore songs for years. We expanded that and I think people were shocked at first in 1989 but I think people seem to appreciate it more now. It was something ahead of its time, I feel.

A lot of hardcore and punk bands have had a more nihilistic view about life, but Bold had songs like "Always Try." What prompted you to share these types of messages with people?
Warnke: With me writing the lyrics, it's just how I was. In general, I'm someone that wants things to go right and I don't have patience for pettiness or negativity. Granted, when you're that age it is an idealist time, but I think it's part of my nature to think that yes there are terrible things in this world but I can either be defeated by it and give up or you can do something about it. We had a song on Speak Out, "Change Within," which might be trite but I think it's also true in that maybe you can't change the world in one day but if you start but changing yourself you can influence those around you and you could be an inspiration for someone. There are plenty of people throughout history who have lived by that and have changed the course of history. So, it really is about being thoughtful.
Capone: I think it had to do with the kind of people we were. New York is a hard, tough city and there are definitely bands that reflected that. But there were also a lot of bands that wanted to be united and wanted positivity. It was the environment and what prompted us was that we wanted to sing songs that were the opposite of hate...about searching and figuring out things in your life. I think Minor Threat and 7 Seconds started this attitude and then Youth of Today and Bold continued it on in 1985. We're just not nihilistic kind of people; we're not in a G.G. Allin cover band. [laughs]

How did you get hooked up with Revelation Records?
Warnke: Again, it was kind of a case of right place, right time. Wishingwell Records, ran by the guys from Uniform Choice, was going to do it at first, but it was taking a long time. They had a lot of other releases coming out and we were getting frustrated in that we just wanted to get the record out there. We had recorded it; had the artwork together but it just wasn't coming together. We also knew Jordan Cooper from Revelation, who was a friend of Ray Cappo's, and he offered to put it out if we weren't happy with the situation with Wishingwell. Jordan had a good business sense and since I knew him and Ray, we basically trusted them and decided to go with Revelation to get our record out there.

Bold changed its sound with the coming of the songs on *Looking Back*. What influenced you to go in this musical direction?
Warnke: In the summer of 1988 we went out west and played some shows up and down the California coast. On the flight home, I was listening to the Beyond demo, which was an excellent band from Long Island, NY. It was definitely a hardcore record, but it was just different; it had elements of metal, but not too much metal, it still had a true hardcore sound. The guitar work, in particular, was great. So, I started thinking that maybe we should get a second guitarist, namely the guitarist from Beyond—Tom Capone. When we got back I made some calls and got Tom's number and called him up and it turned out he was a big Bold fan. He was thrilled to play with us. His musicianship really augmented the whole sound for us and was a big factor in the Looking Back material. Another thing was that we knew the band would probably be breaking up at the end of 1989 because most of us were in college and we were all going off in our own directions. We just decided we wanted to have one final release that would really leave a mark and hopefully make people remember us, so that's what Looking Back was our attempt to do.
Capone: We weren't a "straightedge" band per se by that point. We weren't doing drugs or anything but then again we weren't 13 year old kids anymore. So, this material was more like a positive reflection on things. We came from that scene and still fully support it, but we're not going to write songs about it. I think Looking Back showed people we weren't little kids anymore just doing straightforward straightedge songs. We also listened to a lot of metal at that time, as well. [laughs] We were also into Dag Nasty and Embrace and Fugazi. So, we blended all of that with the traditional Bold sound and that's what came out.

Were people receptive to this more progressive sound at the time?
Warnke: This record came out, if I'm not mistaken, after we broke up, so we never really got to play those songs live that much. But in terms of the reviews and word of mouth, people seemed to be blown away by it. Even though it was sort of a risk and musically different, most people seemed to appreciate the changes.

A lot of people from the late 80s straightedge scene started to move away from the label by the end of the decade and into the 90s? Why do you think so many people stopped identifying with the movement?
Warnke: I think some people might find it limiting in the sense that it shouldn't necessarily be your whole identity; it should be something you choose to do because it's right for you. I think as you get older you are trying to find out who you really are and you get into so many more different things whether it's political or religious ideologies or whatever so you're scope tends to broaden a bit. You're trying to find your purpose in life so I don't think straightedge, for some, was as important in the broader scheme of things.
Capone: I sometimes get flack from people for saying this, but how many people who were straightedge in 1985 still are? Sure, there are a few, but most people just eventually get into exploring other things and ideas, even if they don't drink or do drugs or whatever. I think straightedge is a great and positive thing for the most part, but I don't understand how people can expect other folks to keep that "label" for a lifetime. There are other things to explore, as well.

Why do you think this era of hardcore is so fondly remembered by many? What about this era, and straightedge in general, appeals to people?
Warnke: I'm proud that I was a part of it...it's a positive thing. It's a healthy way to live your life as long as it's not used to prove you're "better" than somebody. I think it's evident that a lot of people liked what we had to say from those days; I think our message was an optimistic one about finding out who you are and challenging what society puts in front of you. I think during this time period you had a lot of productive, energetic and talented people that were at the right place at the right time. You

have to remember that punk wasn't really that old at that time; we're talking about only seven years or so after the Sex Pistols really got going, so things were still taking shape at that point. We were influenced by a lot of things at that time, which affected how we looked, the way we dressed, etcetera. Even the layout of our records was influenced by some designs from hip-hop; it was just a combination of things but it was also new but we made it our own. People recognized the sincerity and anger and frustration behind it. It was a positive message but at the same time the music hits you in the gut because it's very visceral. I think it's a combination of the strong, aggressive music and thoughtful lyrics that tend to draw people to it.

Capone: I think because it was original and the music was awesome. It's its own thing and has a philosophy behind it and anyone that likes rock music or punk or whatever would have a lot of things to get from it. It had a philosophy that was helpful to people so of course people are attracted to it. Now it's very nostalgic and people collect all the old shirts...but it was also ahead of its time. It's just like anything else—like when the Velvet Underground came out. They are looked at as geniuses now, but at the time there weren't as many people paying attention.

What do you miss about this time-period in your life the most?

Warnke: It was a special time; we were all close. We were successful and able to travel and play and experience all these different things. To be young and have people buy your records and be into them...there's nothing like it. It was very gratifying and it makes you hungry and makes you want to keep doing it. So, I guess I miss that part of it...meeting so many great people that I have so many fond memories of. We also got a tremendous amount done in a short period of time and I feel lucky to have done so.

Which "era" of Bold do you think truly defines you guys as a band? Why do you feel this way?

Warnke: I would say the best representation of us would be our last tour because we were playing all the songs from Speak Out, which is a huge part of our catalog, but we were also playing some of our last songs, which were forward-thinking and innovative. I think we were at our best right before we broke up.

Capone: For me, it would be the Looking Back era. That's when I had my main involvement. I think we were all proud of it. I remember Matt once talking about that record in an interview and basically saying that it showed we weren't just little kids in the scene anymore; we had grown up.

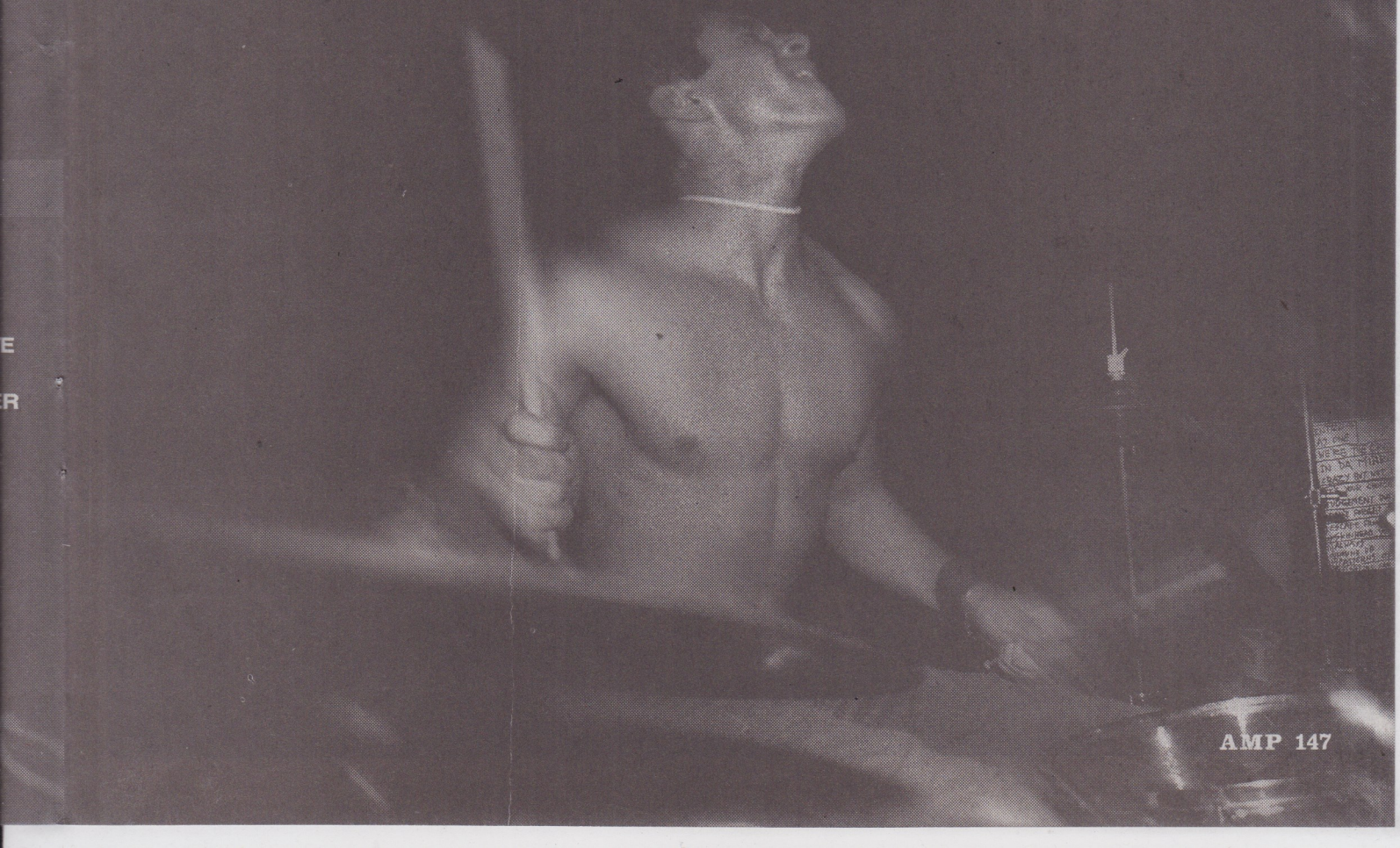
Why do you feel the urge to put Bold together again at this point in your career?

Warnke: Honestly, I never thought it would happen just because we've all moved on in life, so I just thought it would never happen. Tom called me up a couple of months ago because I had asked him a couple of years ago on a whim if he'd ever consider doing some shows and at that time he just didn't have the time to do it. But he called me a couple months ago and said he was feeling it now. He said he thought the time was right and rather than treat it as a "reunion" he wanted to write new material and see if we could pick things up where we left off. It's not just some nostalgia trip to play our old songs; it's very much an active band and we're going to try and write and album and see how it goes from there. It's been great so far; it feels like we haven't missed a beat.

Capone: We don't have the same goals we did as when we were younger; it's a different thing now. We want to take it further musically, though. I think it we'll be able to make something really amazing out of it. I'm so sick of all these emo singers and guys that are trying to "sound" like they want to be on the radio. I guess I just like that traditional New York hardcore vocal sound and I feel like it's not exposed as much as it should be.

Looking back, how do you feel about the legacy Bold left behind?

Warnke: I think our songs stand up and I hope people are able to hear the songs differently now. A lot of people have their own favorites, but I'm really curious to see how people respond to our shows. ↖





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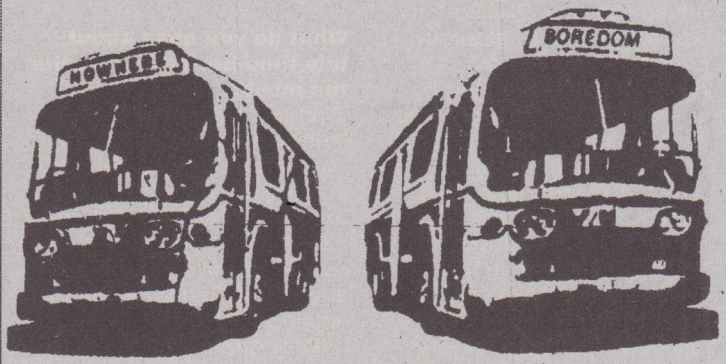
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every time i die

By Kent Bamburger / Photography By Gordie Ball

What is your name, and what do you do in ETID?
My name is Andy Williams, and I play guitar in Every Time I Die.

How long has ETID been around for, and how did you originally get started with the band?
Seven years we've been together, and basically me, Jordan and Rat were all in different bands that broke up around the same time. So we decided to play together, and the rest is history.

After experiencing a few of your shows and reading your individual bios, you guys seem to be pretty laid back and joking guys. What does ETID take seriously?
Our music, that's for sure. The band is pretty much the most serious thing in any of our lives. The number one thing to remember is that you are making music and it's got to be fun. There's bands out there like Bleeding Through that are always stone faced and serious. Those dudes are our friends, but we don't want to be a part of that. We take it pretty seriously, but we bring an element it may not seem like we take too much seriously, but when it comes to the band, we do. It's the only thing we have.

So what do you think you would be doing if you weren't playing now?
I'd either be a sushi chef, a commercial fisherman, or a drafter. All things that I used to do.

Have you ever got into any beef with any other bands because someone in your band may have made fun of them?
Not really. I hate Avenged Sevenfold, I'm not afraid to say it. I think they are the fakest band on earth.

Why do you say that?
Just because. You just look at them, see their names, and it's just a joke. Music to them isn't as serious as their fucking image. For the most part, we kind of used to have beef with Atreyu, and I said some stupid shit about them in the past. Then I met them and they were pretty sweet. We don't have beef anymore. The only beef I want is with Avenged Sevenfold. They have a knack about talking shit about my friends and a knack about calling bands out, and no bands do anything about it. Whatever.

Is there any significance to the name "Every Time I Die"?
Nothing at all, it sounded cool. It was really funny because their was a song by Children of Bodom called "Every Time I Die," and those dudes for some reason thought we named the band after it, even though we had been a band 3 years before the song came out. It was really funny because they were on tour with Throwdown, and I went to go hang out with those dudes. They were like "yo we gotta introduce you to those dudes in Children of Bodom because they think you named the band after their song." So like I walk in, and they introduce me, and one guy was like, "hey hey Every Time I Die," and said something about how it was an honor for them to have our band named after his song. Then I was like "sorry guys, I've never heard you before," because I honestly hadn't. Then I said, "I've never heard you guys, I'm sorry to crush your boner. Later," It was pretty funny because he didn't know what crushing a boner was about.

So how has ETID evolved since the release of Burial Plot Bidding War?
We have had to grow up. Even through Last Night In Town, every one was still in school except me. I had a full time job drafting, making 18 dollars an hour, and everyone else was still in school. What ended up happening was they all graduated or dropped out. We were sick of working normal jobs, so we just said fuck it, let's tour all the time. I think they helped out a lot musically. There was

"We like to bring a party. If you're going to come see us, you're going to leave with a smile. That's what you can expect, if you come to see Every Time I Die..."

so much distance, because everyone was in school so we couldn't practice as much. Now that we are always together, our ideas are just right there. I can be thinking something in my head and Rat will just be like "yeah," it's right there in his head. Same thing with Jordan, he's my right hand man; I'm his left hand man. We have the same brain. I think that's just what happens being in a band and evolving over time.

If someone hasn't seen ETID before, what should they expect?
Basically, just fun. We like to bring a party. If you're going to come see us, you're going to leave with a smile. That's what you can expect, if you come to see Every Time I Die, you are going to leave with a smile. That's the first thing you can expect. Other then that, you aren't going to be puking or anything like that.

Let's talk about your upcoming album, *Gutter Phenomenon*. How long did it take you to write and record the album, where at, and with whom?
Overall, it took us five and a half months. That's with writing and recording together. We took about three and a half to four months to write it, then a month and a half to record it. We did it with Machine at the Machine Shop. He did the new Lamb of God record, and the new Clutch record. I think he did the new Emanuel record also. That was awesome.

Yeah, that must have been an experience with him.
It was a real experience. It wasn't the usual go into the studio and have some guy just sit there and play music. He hounded us and was like "come on, you can do that better!" All right dude, chill out!

What was the biggest difference in the creation process between *Hot Damn!* And *Gutter Phenomenon*?
I think we didn't give a fuck on this one. We did what we wanted to, we weren't afraid to do anything on this record. There was no fear in the process. For *Hot Damn!*, we were like "oh fuck, we did Last Night In Town. So and so said this about the record, and this magazine said it was the number one album of the year." So we got all these expectations that it had to be better then Last Night In Town. In this one, we were just like fuck it, let's just do our thing and not worry about anything. I think this is the truest Every Time I Die record yet. We weren't afraid to be like fuck it. In the past, we were afraid to blaze a solo in a part, or put a lead over something. So we were just like fuck it man, put a solo there.

I have heard the song "Guitared and Feathered," in which the vocals seem much different then your previous releases. Why the change?
Dude, it's different every record. The dude just doesn't know what he wants to do. I think it has a lot to do with growing up. I think his vocal cords are finally where they're at. He's not a kid anymore, he's 25. When we recorded *Hot Damn!* he was 22, and when we recorded Last Night In Town, he was 19. So I think now... he's a man now. His pubes are growing and his balls dropped.

So can someone effectively gage how the new album will sound by hearing "Guitared and Feathered," or will the album be a surprise to people?
For sure man, if you have heard "Guitared and Feathered," everything is along the lines of that. Everything meets that standard. I don't know, I would say a little more rock, but we've



always had that rock influence. But yeah, I would say it's a good judgment.

What songs did Gerald Way and Daryl Pulombo sing guest vocals on the new album?
Gerald Way sings on a song called "Kill The Music," which is like a southern rock song almost. Wait, no it isn't, what am I talking about? It's like a Motorhead song. We're playing it on the Sounds of the Underground. Then Daryl plays on a song called... hmm why don't I know this one. I want to say "Eventually Not," But yeah, when he came in and sang it was the most professionalism I have ever seen. He came into the studio and nailed his part in like four takes and was like "Alright guys, I'll see you later."

How long have you known those guys?
Gerald? You know the fucked up thing is, they are going to have a platinum record this year. Two years ago they were opening for us.

Yeah, they were opening for Piebald too.
Yeah, exactly. And now they have a platinum record, which is pretty funny. They are great guys, so I wouldn't ever have them for anyone else. We've known them for probably about three years now. And then Daryl, we've known forever. Before we were in the band, me and Rat used to book Glassjaw in Buffalo. We've known Daryl for eight or nine years now.

Who designed the cover art and where did the idea come from?
God, I really wish I could remember the name of the company who did it. Anyways, it's this dude named Artie from Canada. Is it Artie? Gordy, that's it, some sort of weird Canadian name. Yeah, his name is Gordy. Switzerland? Yeah, that's what the company is called. Anyways, they are dudes we have known forever because Toronto is only an hour from us, and that's where they live. We had some weird French dudes doing the art to begin with, and it just looked really weird. There was this mouse playing guitar and it made no sense, so we had to throw those French dudes out. We got these Canadian dudes, and it just seemed right. They just did the new Boys Night Out cover. So we brought them a couple of ideas and came back and it was perfect, they really busted their ass on this one.

How has the change been from Steven to Kevin?
We actually just kicked Kevin out a day ago. So now we are going from Steven to Kevin to this dude named Chris Burns. You're hearing this first, you're getting this first. No one else knows about this. Breaking news.

So what happened with Kevin?
I'll just give you the timeline. Steve was just... he's one of our best friends, and we had just came back from Europe and got done with recording, and I went into Guitar Center because that's where he works now. He was just like, "oh how did everything go man," and it was really weird. Basically what ended up happening was certain members of the band didn't get along with Steve, and it came down to either he leaves or I leave. Considering the four of us where original members, it would be kind of messed up if someone left because of Steve. He was in the band for four years, but again, he's one of the most stand up dudes I know. He was great. He did a great job for the four years he was in the band. And with Kevin, it just never meshed. Honestly, like we never hit that point with him where it was like "oh this is great," It's shitty to say, but nothing matched up. Everything he told us in the beginning completely got turned around. Every time we asked him a question about something it would be the exact opposite. When he first started, we would ask him something and he would be like "oh yeah, totally totally know what you're talking about," Then he wouldn't do it, and we would be like you said you knew what we were talking about. It never worked out. Just different people I guess.

So did you end up recording with Kevin?
Yeah, Kevin recorded with us.

So were there any problems in the studio with Kevin?
Yeah, but I don't want to get into it. It was one of those things where he would just waste time, and you would ask him why, and he would give some dumb answer. It sounds a little bitter, I know I'm sorry. It's just one of those things where people don't mix, he just wasn't one of us. But yeah, we've got this guy named Chris Burns now. He played in Nora, and he played in Ensign. He's a stand up guy that we've known forever. So when we found out things weren't going to work out with Kevin, we asked him and he said let's go.

Why did you guys decide to do the Sounds of the Underground Tour this summer?
To be honest with you, Warped Tour was definitely interested in getting us, but then it fell through. We thought about how a band can exist doing a summer tour up against all those other tours? So basically we didn't get Warped Tour and we couldn't do Ozzfest because you can only do it one year in a row. Plus I don't know if I would ever want to do it again.

Oh really?
It was just weird. We're a band that likes clubs, were not a band that likes to play on huge stages way away from people. It was cool, it was awesome, it was a great experience, but for the most part it was tough. So we were just like fuck it, let's take a run for this thing. We got the offer, and it was kind of hard to turn up. Or pass down I should say.

So this summer's tour isn't going to be huge stages or anything like that?
It's like the smaller Warped Tour stage. It's not like a huge huge thing, I don't think.

What bands are you excited to tour with?
Throwdown, A Life Once Lost, and Norma Jean.

Have you ever seen GWAR?
I have seen GWAR many a times. Actually when I was thirteen years old my dad took me to see them, I got jizzed on.

Do you have any plans set up for a tour after the SOTU Tour?
We go straight to Europe with A Life Once Lost and Twelve Tribes. Then when we come home from that, we are doing a headlining tour with High On Fire, The Red Chord, and The Chariot.

So do you guys have plans for a CD release show set up?
Supposedly, there is one supposed to be in Buffalo right around the time the album comes out. We leave for the High on Fire tour, and the record comes out on August 23rd. We're going to do it in Buffalo. We might do an actual party, where we don't even play and just have the CD playing and have an actual party. We might actually have a band play our music, so we can actually hear our music, first hand. There's definitely going to be something special for the CD release show.

That's about it, anything else?
Just fucking drink beer and eat pussy, that's basically it. Trying to spread the word man. Grow pubes and get hand jobs. Just fucking do it dude.


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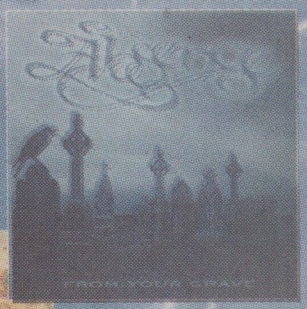
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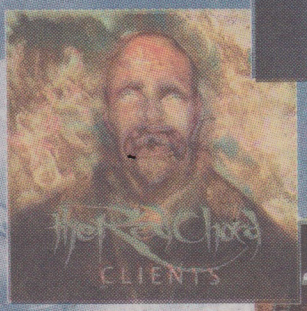
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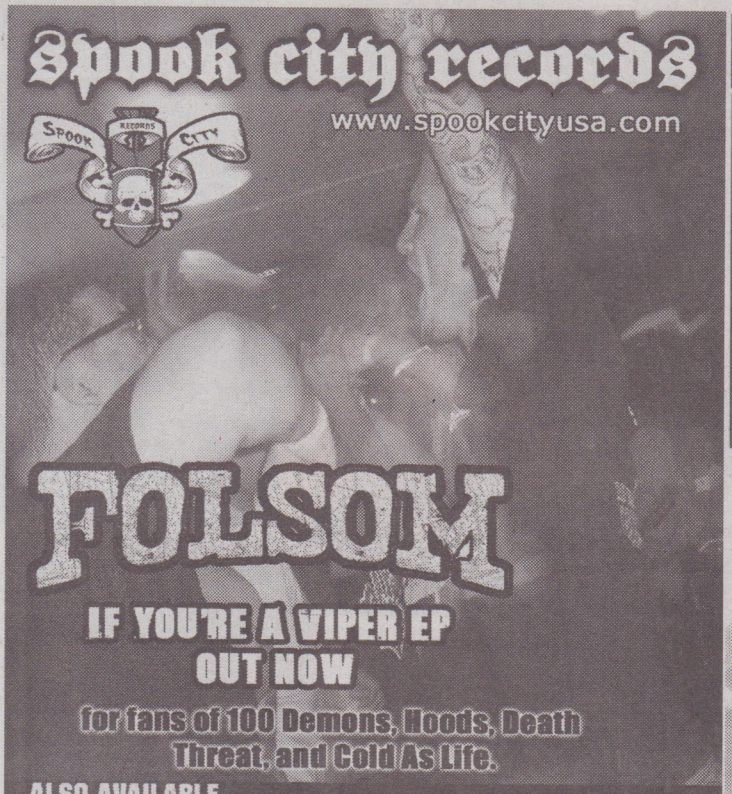
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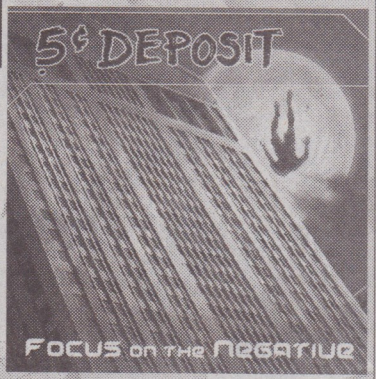
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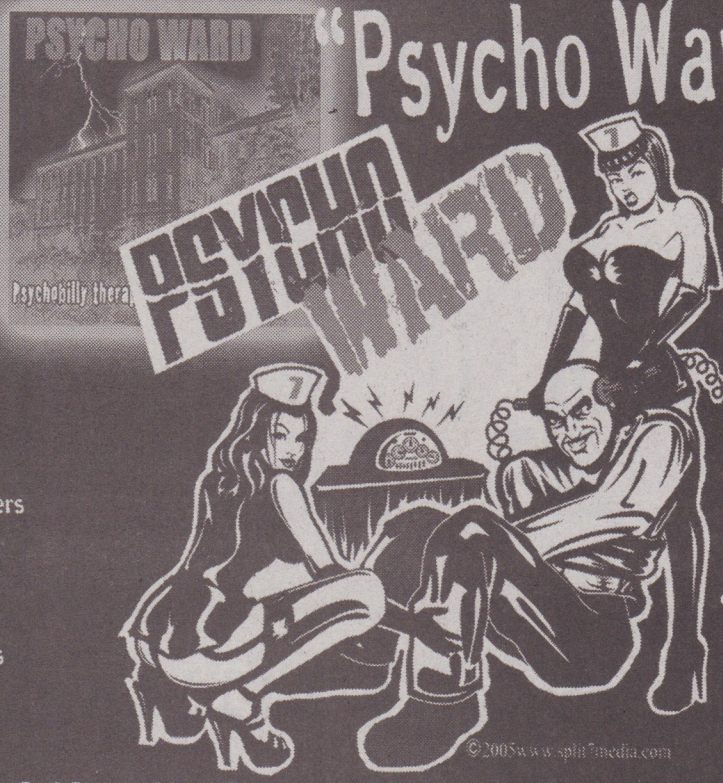
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CREATING A "LEGACY"
INTERVIEW WITH MADBALL'S FREDDY CRICIEN

By Don Sill / Photography By Gordie Ball

With tracks like "Time Bomb," Darkest Days," "Dammed," "Hardcore Pride," and "For My Enemies," you could say that NYHC legends, Madball, haven't changed much during their nearly five-year hiatus and thank God for that. Madball, (who includes vocalist, Freddy Cricien, bassist Hoya, guitarist Mitts and drummer Rigg Ross), have reformed and are ready to rip some heads off this summer with a new album and summer tour. The NYC based band recently signed with Ferret Records and are prepping to drop their latest album, LEGACY. Produced by Zeuss (Hatebreed, Shadows Fall, Throwdown); Madball promises that LEGACY is their best record yet. "All the songs are a combination of all our elements," says front-man, Cricien, "a little of the old/ a little of new- it's just Madball." AMP caught up with Cricien in the studio during their last day of work on LEGACY and got the skinny on the new record as well as his perspective on the current hardcore scene.

Congrats on signing with Ferret.
Thanks, man, I'm psyched.

How is everything going so far with those Ferret guys?
So far so good, you know. I had a good gut feeling about working with those guys and so far they've come through on everything they said they would and we did our part. We're all expecting a good year ahead.

Sounds good, bro. How far have you guys gotten on this Ferret debut?
Album's done, man. It's officially done. Today was our last day doing all the little fine-tuning stuff and now we just have to get the whole order of it together and take it to mastering.

LEGACY is the name of this new one- how do you feel about this record?
I feel great; I feel this is our best record yet. Now, I know that a lot of bands say that about a new record coming out but I just feel that we're way over due, you know, we haven't done a record in a while





and we've been through a lot of things, personal and otherwise, and I just feel that with this record everything just came together fairly smooth. The new label, our sound, our writing, everything- it just feels right. All the songs are a combination of all our elements- a little of the old/ a little of new- it's just Madball. For anyone who knows us and knows our history knows that this is one hundred percent hardcore; one hundred percent Madball. It's us with a new touch, a new flavor and a touch of new production.

This record is highly anticipated, a lot of Madball freaks are waiting for this thing to drop.
[Laughs] yeah, I know. I feel confident about it, the boys feel confident about it, the label had heard the record and they're psyched. So, I can't see why anyone, especially people who were already into us, wouldn't like it.

How about new fans?
Yeah, man, I'm looking to get some new people interested also.

You said that you guys have been through a lot during the past few years. How does that translate in your lyrics?
I try and always keep things in the context of Madball, but at the same time we are a little older and we have been through some things these last few years, so I have to touch on that. I mean, I'm still talking about street-stuff, you know what I mean, the music is in your face and it is aggressive and people expect to lyrics to be talking about this; that and the other thing. I still tell stories about things that happen to us on the rougher side, but I also touch on family and people we lost and the whole state of the hardcore scene- where has it gone? Where do we wanna take it? - I think there is a good balance. [Laughs] I feel kinda goofy talking about my own lyrics. My guitarist, Mitts, told me that he was really proud of the lyrics and that it was very well balanced, so I'm going off on what he said.

Would you say that Madball is showing more range with LEGACY?
We're still giving people the hard stuff, but we're not one-dimensional people, you know, there's a lot other aspects to our lives. Even thought his music does bring out more of our aggressive side, it tend to do that [laughs] we really vibe off aggression, but we do tend to talk about everything.

You guys are legends of the hardcore game...
Naaa, we're not legends, not yet. [laughs] I appreciate that though, I'm flattered.

[Laughs] okay, as a "veteran" of the hardcore scene, what are your feeling of the scene today? It seems that some of it is beginning to cross-over somewhat.
I think it's great. I think that heavy music is starting to get a little more light shined on it as a whole. From a band perspective, from someone who has been doing this for a long time, who wouldn't want that? You wanna elevate as a human being, especially with your music...even hardcore, which is always underground- it's world-wide- but it's underground, but what's wrong with elevating? What's wrong with bringing it to another level? I don't think there's anything wrong with that, I'm all about that.

Right, everybody is entitled to a slice of pie.
Look, this has become my career, by default or whatever, this is what I do. I never went to college and I never ended up going other routes that people go. I ended up, for whatever reason, going with this. So not only am I passionate about playing but I also want to help raise this music to another level as soon as possible.

It's long over due for hardcore music to leak out into the mainstream and reach that next level.
Yeah, but when I say "take it to another level" I'm not even being unrealistic. I'm not talking gold or platinum status; I'm not even talking that. I mean "another level" for where we come from. Music in general is going through rough times and being in the hard music scene is even rougher, but now there's a lot more avenues to showcase and if hardcore is going to be showcased on a bigger level then I wanna be a part of it.

New York, well Long Island, has been producing a lot of emo bands. What are your thoughts on the whole emo-wave?
[Laughs] You know what...I've learned something, man, I've learned that it's all good and I don't knock nobody for what they do. I can't get caught up in pointing fingers and we have to stop thinking about everybody else and just be the best with what we do, you know, the best with our sound. We kinda carved our own sound within the hardcore scene and we just gotta do our thing and be the best at what we do.

Do you like emo music? Do you listen to it?
My taste in music is endless, I love everything, from the heaviest of heavy to like...sometimes I listen to the softest, weakest shit [laughs] I'm a sap, man, I like all kinds of music. But my whole thing is that if you really want to be hardcore then you gotta stop segregating it. If we're all gonna be under this hardcore umbrella then first of all you have to have some kind of roots in the scene and second we gotta stop dividing it. I even wrote a song on the record about that shit.

That's the track "H.C. United" right? Solid track.
Yeah, that track talks about how people are out there diving the scene. Like that whole mentality like, "I can't hang out with you because you eat meat," and all that other goofy shit.

[Laughs] Exactly, it does get crazy. That's a good point about dividinng up the scene, we all need to unite in order to excel.
This scene is small enough already so why chop it up and make it even smaller?

Good point. So at this level of the game what are the goals for Madball?
Our goal is to take it to that next level. We kinda put our work in and we grinded and cemented our position within our world, and I say that with all humility and modesty, but I mean it's time to elevate. It's time to take this thing up to another notch. Coming from the hardcore scene there's nowhere else to go but up.

A video for the first single off LEGACY entitled "Heavenhell" was shot at Kenny's Castaways in New York City with director Dale "Rage" Resteghini (Hatebreed, Shadows Fall, Mudvayne, Agnostic Front) www.madballnyhc.com

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EMANUEL

By Paige Guggemos

Meet EMANUEL, one of Vagrant's newest bands. Hailing straight-out of Kentucky, these four outspoken boys have the bark, and the bite, that most 'new' bands are lacking these days. Don't try and stick them into a genre though, you won't be able to. And while I managed to get them to sit down long enough to answer a few questions, don't expect them to be too serious.

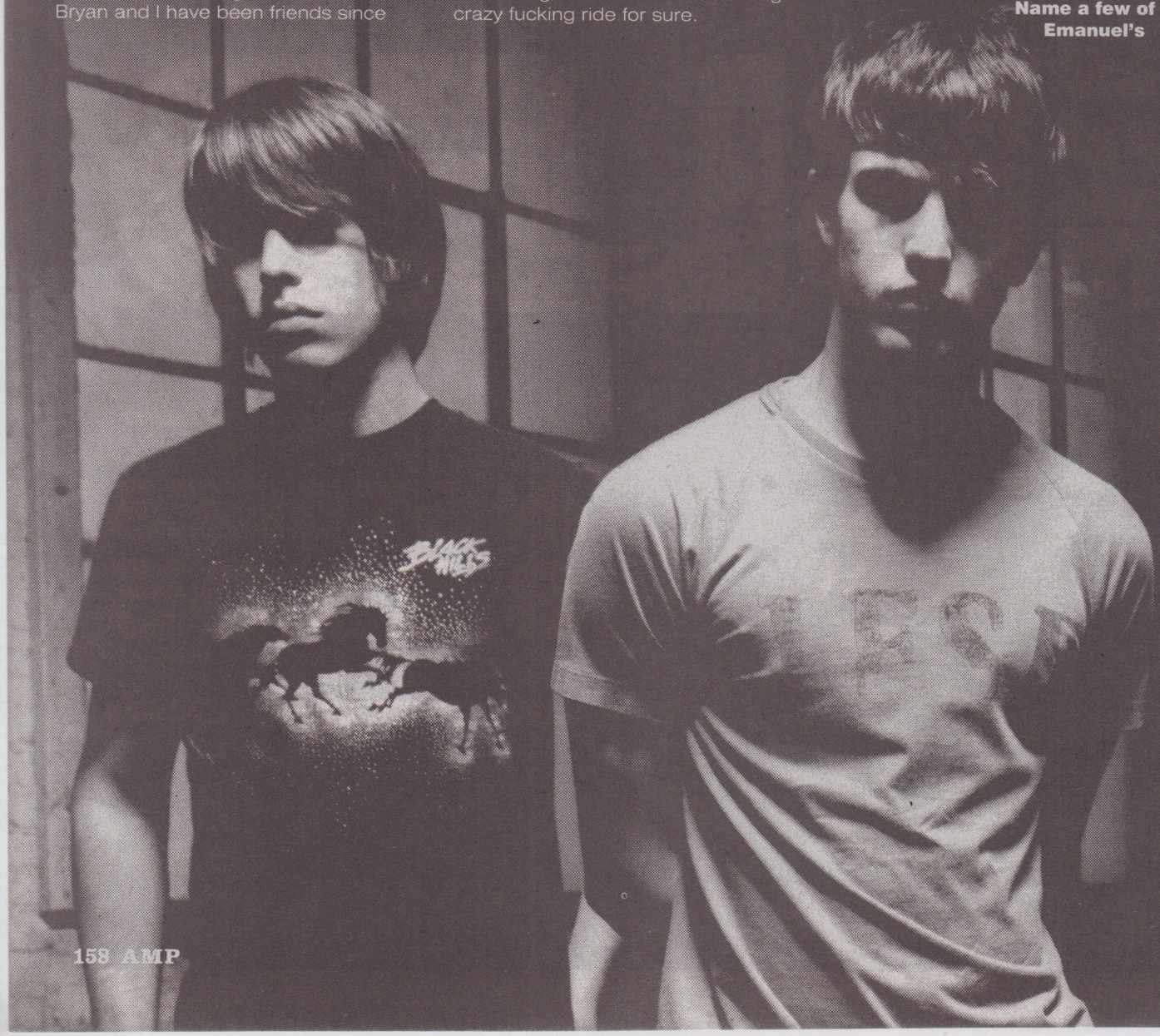
Hey guys, state your names and ages for the record, please.
Matt Breen (vocals, guitar) 21
Mat Barber (guitar, vocals) 21
Bryan Whiteman (bass) 21
Anthony Brock (drums 21)

How did Emanuel get started?
Bryan and I have been friends since third grade and started jamming together in garage bands in middle school. It was basically the same situation with Anthony and Matt at a different school in the same town and we met up and started jamming together the summer before we all started high school. It's been a long crazy fucking ride for sure.

You guys are from Kentucky, how's the 'scene' out there compared to other places you've been to?
I really like it. Not a lot, a lot of national acts come though Louisville so its basically local bands playing local shows. We played a show at home in February and there was like 600 kids there, a great turn out for a local show by any standards.

You chose to cover The Smashing Pumpkins hit "Disarm" on your EP; what made you choose that song? Would you say that they're one of Emanuel's inspirations, or did you just like the song?
They are definitely one our influences. They bring together huge guitar rock with beautiful elaborate melodies. We chose that song because it's really stripped down and it gives listeners the rare chance to hear Emanuel with out the layers of noise and guitars we bury ourselves in. Not only that, but it's a beautifully truthful song that I feel like I can relate to.

Name a few of Emanuel's



influences, musical or otherwise, that listeners would probably not expect.
THE BEATLES, DAFT PUNK, CREEDANCE.

How did the record deal with Vagrant happen? Did you guys search them out, or did they find you?
We made our record in March of last year and started sending it out to a lot of labels. They got in touch with us and flew us out to L.A. to hang out and talk about our future, and it sounded good.

How long were you guys in the studio recording 'Soundtrack' for? How long was the full-length finished before its release date?
We spent a month in the studio actually making the record and then it sat in a vault in Fort Knox for an entire year before it actually came out.

Breen has previously stated, "The songs on 'Soundtrack' are ten stories from the most fucked up year of my life." Are there any specific events that you guys are willing to share that might clarify this statement?
The song 'Breathe Underwater' is about purposefully crashing a car into a river to kill all of your friends in the back seat. That happened once to me.

Alternative Press stated that 'Soundtrack' contains 'sexist undertones.' What is your response to this?
What's wrong with being sexy? (laughs)

As a band what do you feel Emanuel's greatest strength is? Biggest weakness?
I think it's our sound in responses to both aspects. Where are slightly left of center, and that sets us apart and singles us out at the same time. I wouldn't trade it for anything still. If Emanuel is to real for you, then it's your problem mang...

Would you guys rather be recording or touring?
50/50. We love writing new shit, but making new fans is crucial.

What are three items you can't hit the road without?
A comfy sleeping bag, Vice City for when I need to blow some shit up, and Xanex for plane rides.

Emanuel has impressive live energy; do you guys have any pre-show routines to get your energy up?
We just chant the word elk. I can't explain it really.

What song is your favorite to play live?
'The New Violence."

What are a few of the bands that you guys can't stop listening to recently? Any local bands you know that listeners should look out for?
IDLEWILD, DAFT PUNK, BEATLES, BRIGHT EYES. Those four bands never leave my playlist.

What can listeners expect from Emanuel within the next year?
Us playing your town. A few times.

Any final shout-outs/comments?
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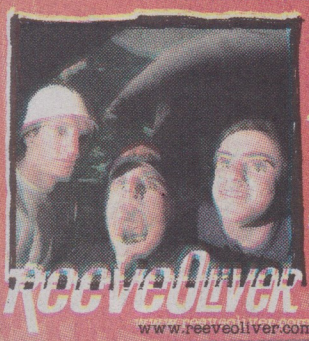
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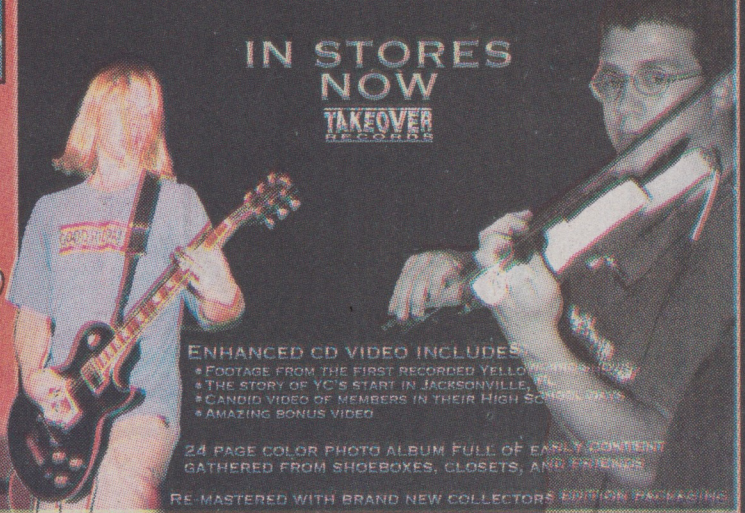
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HANK JONES

INTERVIEW WITH VOCALIST MIKE TORTI





By Kristopher Todd Upjohn

So, you're into being a positive hardcore band. Tell me about that and about some of the negativity of the hardcore scene that you're trying to avoid.
Well, we are just trying to have fun. We're not really trying to avoid anything, but we don't find it necessary to be exclusive or have an overly macho or violent attitude.

Is it me, or is there a satirical message embedded in the sometimes goofy-on-the-surface lyrics of your songs?
Pizza Party is really the only song written to be goofy. Every other song is written with some form of message behind it. Some people will hear that song or see the video we made for it and just write us off as another joke band or a band that can't be taken seriously when really if you read into the other songs there are a lot of serious issues brought to the table. With that song, we just want to make sure that people don't forget to have fun when listening to music, and sometimes hardcore forgets that.

Where did you get the band name from?
Simpsons.

What about the CD title- 'Saturdays Of Thunder?'
Simpsons, too. Try to figure it out on your own and let us know if you get it.

Could you say the song "Get Pissed" is a sort of representative anthem of what HANK JONES is all about?
Regarding "scene politics" yeah, but the band is more than just caring about scene politics. This song has the most direct lyrics, its straight to the point. We are all about equality, whether it's within the scene or anywhere in the world and making sure that you respect yourself, your friends and family.

"Preaching to the Choir of Molested Boys" doesn't seem to have anything at all to do with the recent Catholic scandals when you read the lyrics. It seems much more personal. True?
Yeah it is. The title is a loose metaphor for the fact that we are singing songs about stuff they've (Molested Boys) heard a million times and think they know it all. The Molested Boys part is a play on the whole Catholic Church scandal, but it also represents those pretentious scene kids. It's also a jab at the bands who have the intentional over-the-top shock value in lyrics and imagery that some bands seem to need to get recognized in the community. The song itself is about realizing that it's all right to recognize that things you've done or said in the past are wrong. It's completely natural to question what you are doing, because you learn what to do and what not to do and that helps mold you into exactly who you are.

Though you are shooting for positive hardcore, there does seem to be some catharsis of angst and personal pain in your music. Any comments?
Well, we are not really shooting for positive hardcore, we just have a lot of issues on our minds and topics we want to address. Where the songs come off with angst and pain, the lyrics usually lead to a positive outcome or realization.

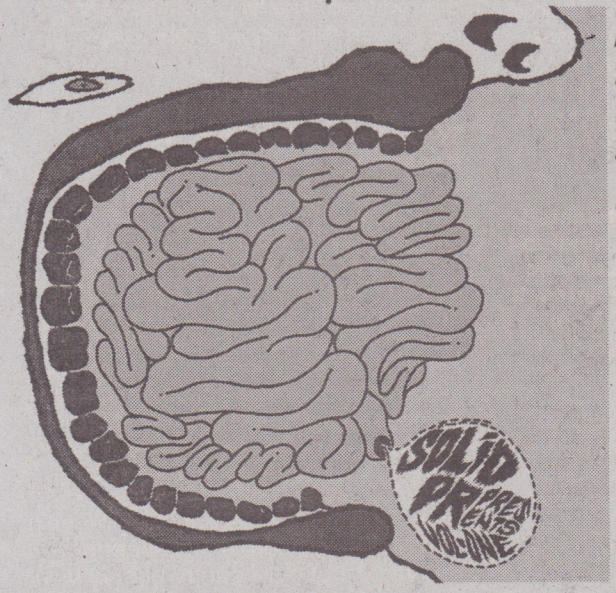
On the surface, "Pizza Party" seems like a frivolous song. What's the meaning behind it?
Basically the song is just all about getting together with friends and having a good time. The lyrics just say it all. No hidden meanings in this song whatsoever, ha ha!

Tell me about the song "Teddy Roosevelt."
Well, there's all this talk about being anti-racist, anti-homophobic, treating everyone fairly and those thoughts really aren't being put into action. Even in today's society, one where we pride ourselves in treating each other equally, racism and homophobia thrive. There just needs to be a change from talking about taking action and actually doing it and accepting everyone for who they are. Just because someone is from a different country or has a different sexual preference doesn't make them any different than the next person at all. There's this superior mentality that our country has, that we are better than everyone in the world, and that's a crock of shit. We are all created equal whether you live in North Dakota or Indonesia.

Final thoughts?
Have fun at shows!



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GUEST: RONEN KAUFFMAN

In my perfect world, punk and hardcore wouldn't exist. Initially, it's a horrifying thought, right? After all, where would we be without our anthemic choruses, our sarcasm, and our innate distrust of "the system"? In a boring, oppressive world, sometimes the only fun – the only salvation and escape we can find – is to thrash about, scream at the top of our lungs, hang out and be the kids. Be the scene.

But if that salvation and escape are so necessary – so essential to surviving the drudgery and bullshit of the modern world – doesn't that mean that there is a lot of bad stuff going on?

Take Alcoholics Anonymous, for example; a great organization run by fine people who are really doing something with their time and energy. They help our society manage a pretty serious problem. But wouldn't it be great if they went out of business? Imagine – an America where alcohol doesn't erode peoples' lives; a mass culture that encourages individuals to effectively manage their relationship with the sauce. Of course, it's all very idealistic – but does that mean that it's impossible?

Then there's cancer: it's a shitty disease, but it employs tons of people. The American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, the Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization (the little pink bow people) – people involved in organizations like these and countless others are totally fucking awesome. But I would still love it if they were all unemployed tomorrow because someone found a cure.

Rape counselors. God, how I'd love to see these people become obsolete. Number one, they square off with one of the most horrific and savage acts committed by our species. Second, what a tough job – trying to help put the pieces back together for people victimized by this most despicable form of violence. Please, please, please – someone help me put the rape counselors out of business!

And so on, and so forth.

I don't know about anyone else, but I want to be happy. And since there are so many things in the world that upset me, it stands to reason that I would do right by myself and others by doing all I can to make things as good as possible for as many people as possible. Unfortunately, we still don't have solutions for some of our most basic problems; old stand-bys like hunger, exploitation, domination, corruption and greed. We still have wars, jails, ghettos and material inequity out the ass. Is this our destiny – to slowly trudge through time, barely giving a shit?

Every single one of us sits at the negotiating table. Will you throw your hands in the air with frustration, letting the chips fall where they may? Or will you work, and sweat, and toil, in hopes that, at the very least, your children won't have to deal with the same fucked up shit that made your blood burn? Think about something that has affected you, something real about your world – illness? Abuse? Violence? Money? Bigotry? Now think – what would it be like today if, years and years ago, there was more of an effort to head those issues off at the pass? And yet, our society is often embarrassingly timid – and sometimes incompetent - when it comes to taking up the crucial causes. Despite unprecedented knowledge and tools, even the lowest-hanging fruit sometimes seems far out of reach – we're too busy being greedy, jealous, and killing each another.

One modern example is stem cell research. As South Korea bravely makes stem cell therapy a reality for many very sick people, the U.S. is left in the ideological dust. An uninformed electorate and industrialized career politics have converged to leave our government acting like mystified cave people. This same methodology also prohibits profoundly ill people from using marijuana to relieve pain or induce an appetite crushed by, say, chemotherapy. And all the while, powerful synthetic drugs like Oxycotin and Xanax have turned millions of Americans into prescription drug addicts – everyone from Rush Limbaugh to your own mother is secretly popping pills, and they're not even sick. Then again, the pot lobby doesn't have very deep pockets.

However, it does all provide for some pretty fantastic art and expression. (Plus the mandatory fakes and posers who chase fame and fortune by romanticizing the struggles of humanity.) But in the end, I would much rather have a world without racism than a whole bunch of great Public Enemy records. I'd much rather the military industrial complex disappear all together than hear a totally sick Propagandhi song ever again. I'd much rather all these kinds of problems go away, but I'm also a realist. Lots of our problems as Americans are deeply rooted in the very systems that built this country in the first place. Slavery built wealth; internment campers built railroads; tobacco built congress; and on, and on. So I don't expect utopia any time soon.

That said, it's hard to sit on the sidelines. Progress has, after all, been made over the past few thousand years – even if at the inescapable cost of compromise. So regardless of how we got here, some things are indisputable. Advances in technology and science have allowed us to live longer, experience more, and go further than anyone before us. And constantly working and inventing has made us very clever – sometimes. In the pursuit of enlightenment, the distractions can be overwhelming.

So for me – well, I hope that my descendents inherit a more tolerant, more just world than the one that I was born into. Sure, those who came before me did arguably have it much worse in many ways – but that doesn't mean that the job of "evolving" our civilization is done.

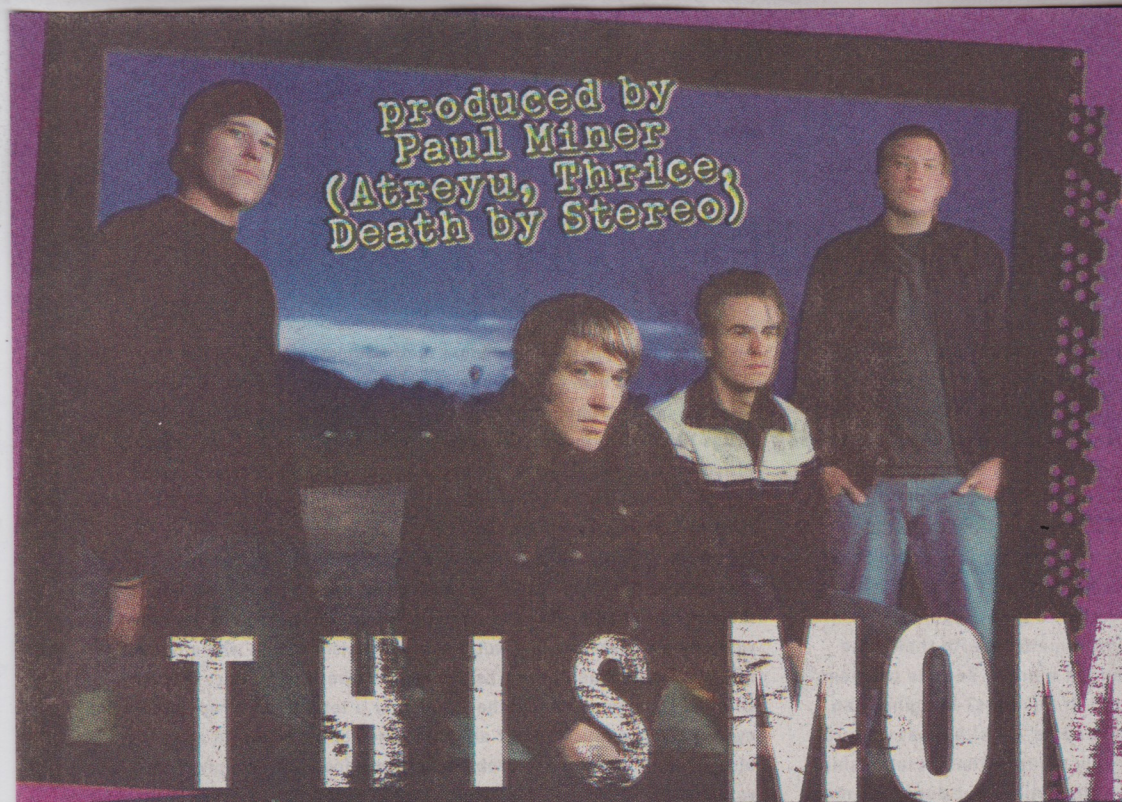
To me, punk and hardcore have always been about that pure reaction – the earnest feeling that one does not have to stand idly by while the world seems to go mad. You can protest, you can dance, or you can sing it out loud, but it's all done in the name of being worth something as people. In recent times, there have been many distractions along that winding road; but I'm confident that, if given the right conditions, things will work themselves out.

Punk and hardcore have always been home to a lot of anger. Rooted in the very disillusionment it now seems to worship, we've become comfortable – even elitist – in our pain and alienation. It's gone so far that, in many cases, the expression emerges as superficial at best – confidence and individuality are smashed – by magazine covers, or makeup, or money. And "rebellion" becomes most useful for bringing in a few dollars, rather than for helping people live more meaningful, relevant, peaceful lives.

It's in all of our interests to destroy punk rock – to end the things that cause us pain. To end the things that make us scream and hate the world; the things that make our parents and co-workers think we are weirdoes. Being bitter, or feeling cheated or alienated – all of these things are signs of intelligence and compassion in the face of hostility. Embrace that sensitivity. Occasionally, it can change the world.

Imagine it – if none of us had to scream.

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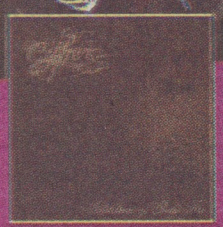


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THEE WHISKEY REBEL

July Entry:

THEE WHISKEY REBEL: VILLAGE IDIOT...OR TIMELESS VISIONARY?

This column was inspired at least in part by a notice I got in the mail about my goddamned 30th high school reunion which is coming up. Yes children, in case you haven't figured it out already I am OLD compared to most AMP readers. I'm not as old as G.G. or Joe Strummer or Stiv or Johnny Thunders or El Duce or the late Ramones would be if they were still around. I'm not as old as the Cramps Lux and Ivy or my heroes Fred and Toody from Dead Moon or one helluva lot of other people from several musical genres loaded with talent still performing today.

I know for a fact that a few of the other columnists from this rag are getting up there in age too for that matter. But, the fact still remains that to most people reading this or ignorantly flipping past it month after month I'm old.

Oh well. What can I say? I at least have the balls to own up to my advanced years unlike quite a few long term musicians and columnists. Give me credit for that.

On the other hand I'm exactly the same age as all the squares who happened to graduate the same year that I did from Beaverton High school in "lovely" (HAH!) Beaverton Oregon.

When you get to be our age you're considered a success if you have a great career going or have acquired a lot of status symbols. On the other hand, if you have a:) a shitty track record of low paying jobs, b:) NO job or c:) a job in a flakey field you're considered a loser by the majority of the middle aged clowns you went to school with.

The cheerful packet of reunion info that I received from whomever the fuck is in charge of organizing the goddamned thing is one of the nosiest, most prying piles of trash I've seen in a long damned time. It actually suggests that even those alumni not planning on attending the reunion should complete a gossipy enclosed form so that everyone attending can hear "what I'm up to". I doubt very much if it was composed and sent around to Beaverton High graduates all over the damned country in a spirit of accepting Brother and Sisterhood. No. I frankly think that most of the reunion "committee" are likely living in nice homes with well cultivated yards paid for with money earned through well planned and bountiful careers. It's not enough that they enjoy their own prosperous lives; they want to be able to have a laugh at the expense of those who have suffered through hard lives replete with shattered relationships, substance abuse problems and economic failure.

What do you think these catty suburban conformists would think if I lied and told them I received their reunion invite at a rehab center or correctional facility? How red would their faces turn if I asked in a jolly reply whether or not a dude we all know for a fact has spent most of his adulthood peddling dope would be attending? Or another infamous guy I read about who was arrested by Portland police and found to have drugs and illicit automatic weapons in his trunk?

Let's speculate for a moment what might happen if I actually (for a laugh) attended their snotty event...and blatantly went around grab assing all the gals with an evil leer in my eye; perhaps reminding them (falsely) how tender and good they were in the sack back in the day?

This may seem far fetched...but something like that almost happened at an earlier reunion I heard about. A fellow big obnoxious drunk who once had a cable access show titled "the great satan at large" almost attended in my place thanks to the alert efforts of my old pal the notorious Jim Goad. Unfortunately the guy had to cancel out at the last minute. Too bad. What if I attended this one and went with the sole purpose in mind of fucking things up?

If I REALLY wanted to have some fun with these fucks, I'd attend the affair and bring with me a black woman posing as my Wife. Now, I'm sad to say THAT would floor more than a few of my ex-classmates from lily white Beaverton even in 2005. Hey, I could always show up with my old buddy from Beaverton who revealed he was gay when we ran into one another at one of my bands shows at an all ages gay disco in the early 80's. That would sure as hell send some tongues to wagging.

Beaverton was always the sort of community that loved to consider itself on the surface "progressive" and open minded when it came to being "tolerant" of a diverse variety of folk. Unfortunately, that was an odd stance for a community that at the time I grew up there had near zero black residents, agricultural workers from Mexico were segregated apart from us white kids at the local berry fields I worked at during summers and on the school yards even straight kids (like me) were taunted and tormented for being "fucking faggots!".

I want to make one thing clear. I don't think Beaverton Oregon is much more or less an ignorant place as opposed to most other small towns and suburbs spread throughout our fair land. People deviating from the norm are frowned upon in most communities. Even though I'm white, male and straight I never was "normal" by Beaverton standards. In 7th grade I was verbally harassed to such an extent by the same group of peers at lovely Highland park junior high school in Beaverton that I was suicidal. I had zero friends for a calendar year. As my classmates and I grew older they began to gradually accept whatever it was they hated about me. As far as I was concerned it was TOO LATE to be friendly with them. I had a small group of close friends in high school...most of whom were twisted cynics like myself. I expected it would be easier dealing with the "real" world after I graduated. I was wrong.

Even when I tried to get along in the work force in Beaverton and Portland Oregon I usually wound up being considered a weirdo. Why? Well, for all of the reasons you might decipher from my columns. I'm an outspoken agnostic. I've spent most of my adult life listening to and performing "childish" loud music. I HATE...I mean I REALLY FUCKING LOATHE the obsessive "neat yard" attitude so many boring middleclass yopes are so proud of.

I married a woman who is every bit as strange as me. We had an oddball Son whom we named Elvis. He's VERY different. A social mutant.

We eventually moved out of Oregon and have spent our lives together in "weird" places by Oregon standards including Hollywood, Philadelphia and here in San Marcos Texas (near Austin). Oregonians are mostly obsessed with the notion that they live in an earthly paradise. They can't fathom why anybody would want to live in a hell hole like NYC....and they think that L.A. is some sort of evil cesspool of humanity where people drive funny and worship a basketball team (the Lakers) they consider to be evil incarnate. Oregonians are convinced that any states East of the Mississippi river are "snow" states...and therefore uninhabitable. Oregonians consider the entire South to be a hellish swamp.

It's not unusual for folks living in one neck of the woods to think their patch of turf is the best. It's understandable I suppose. Still, I've had a bellyful of listening to Oregonians who've never been beyond the border with Idaho critiquing the cities of the East. Average people living in places like Pennsylvania or Texas don't feel compelled to put down Oregon or Utah or other such remote backwaters. Oregonians seem to believe that the world pays attention to their local doings....and that bass-ackwards Southerners and Californicator's follow their progressive path.

Yeah, it's pretty wacky, eh? Take an attitude like that...add 2 million residents....and 250 days of rain per year and you've got one nutty place.

I want no part of it. I don't even like visiting Oregon for 2 or 3 days.

Feeling the way I do, it's obvious there's no way I can visit Beaverton Oregon for a reunion with my peer group from my childhood. I hated them back then and I hate them now. I've written about them in 2 published books and one that's yet to see the light of day. If they ONLY KNEW the things I've written about them and the revered coaches and teachers of B.H.S....they'd likely hang me in effigy at the reunion.

I sure as hell couldn't go and be myself. I'd have to think ahead of time about ways to lie about most of the things I've done in my adult life. How could I explain that I lived by choice in Philly for 8 years? What would I say when I saw their eyes glaze over at the first mention of my membership in one of the longest running punk rock bands in the nation?

Most of them would think it's immature and silly of me to write columns for the childish publication you hold in your hands (in part because it's based out of evil California).

Even though I've held quite a few responsible jobs over the years, I don't have one now. I've been writing books in hope of selling an idea to Hollywood perhaps. How could I relate that to a bunch of schmoes who've lived within 5 miles of the hospital they were born at their entire lives?

Are the rubes I went to school with right? Am I the one who is mixed up? Am I simply a bad seed...a lazy ass job-jumper...a "FUCKING FAGGOT"? A WEIRDO?"

Maybe. Or maybe I've found a good way to escape the trap I perceived very early in my life that was Boregon. Maybe I'll have a few more books published and eventually send one to be made into a film in "Hollyweird". I want Kurt Russell to play the mature me. Perhaps then I'll achieve my dream of seeing signs go up on all the roads approaching San Marcos:

"Now entering San Marcos...home town of the WHISKEY REBEL."

It would be a joy to quietly respond to a future reunion committee invitation with a postcard declaring Phil Irwin to be the witty sage of San Marcos.

I'd settle for the eruption of Mt. Tabor in Portland that I've been praying to the dark forces or...coating the region I hate so much in hot molten lava.

THEE WHISKEY REBEL

August Entry:

LIVE 8 CAN KISS MY ASS

I forced myself to sit and watch MTV's soul stirring "Live 8" coverage for as long as I could take it without barfing on my rug. Why? Because I knew that as an enterprising cynical columnist I'd find myself in front of my IMAC ranting about the farce of the year and I believe in at least checking out first hand the target of my rage when it's free and within easy grasp.

I can already sense that some readers have flipped the page in anger. Oh well. Before I lose most of the rest of you, let me point out a few things. No, I am not against the African "people"...far from it. As I pointed out in one of my first AMP columns long ago, I don't THINK about starving people in other nations. My entire life I've been too tied up with trying to deal with problems on the playground, problems with preachers, bosses, co-workers, neighbors, etc. I've always been in debt to some extent my entire adult life...and I sure as hell am now. I've been livid with rage on two different occasions when employers tried to bully me and other workers into making mandatory payroll deduction pledges to the United way.

I don't believe in the Christian church or any other faith...so I obviously don't feel bound to the ethics of an organized religion when it comes to "charity". Yeah, I get a good feeling on the occasions I've been charitable to friends and relatives over the years...but in most cases the same friends and relatives have helped me back when I've been needy.

One more disclaimer: No (yawn) I am not a "racist" and not a Republican.

I'm a non-partisan (well, ok...part time Libertarian) agnostic, daily drinking cynical hedonist. I'm sure as hell not against sincere folks who have the time and money to solve global problems.

Now, how about Bob Geldof, Bono, etc. and their extravaganza "Live 8"?? Why was I suspicious of it from the first moment I caught a whiff of it? I'll tell you why; any "feel good" project that involves so many rock/rap stars smells like last weeks tuna casserole to me.

It's obvious to me from many years of observation that rock stars and rap icons and famous movie and television personalities are amongst the most insincere opportunists on the face of the earth. A huge percentage of them had to lie and fuck and suck and back stab to get to the top...right?

Knowing that, I think I'd be more likely to trust "live 8" if it were being organized by an auto dealership even. Yeah, hokey car salesmen are flakey, lying scum, but their hoax....the way they work "marks" like you isn't nearly as thoroughly dishonest as the denizens of the utterly corrupt music biz.

One thing is for goddamned sure: As much as it hurts me to endorse any aspect of the Christian church which has fucked up many aspects of my life... I feel a lot more comfortable with stodgy old fashioned "Christian charities". C'mon now...WISE UP. Who are you gonna trust more? A rock star (Bob G.) whom 80% of you can't identify the name of the band he was in long ago?? Or some kind individual who devotes years out of their life to work one on one with poverty stricken folk in 3rd world nations?

I'm afraid I don't see anything wrong with private charities who are forking out loads of money to feed and clothe and otherwise assist poor in our country making them sit through a tedious sermon. As far as I'm concerned, I wouldn't want to have to sit through it...but I'd recognize the fact that by listening to their Jesus pitch I was paying my dues. When you roll your sports car and have to ask Daddy to buy you a new one...you have to listen to at the very least a brief sermon...RIGHT??

There's nothing wrong with the givers of charity demanding to be at least heard out when it comes to their agenda. My Satanist pal's would likely agree with me on this point. HEY! I haven't been living in "candyland". I've known my share of folks who wound up eating at missions on a regular basis. Listening to a religious sales pitch or a lifestyle lecture just comes with the territory when your life is on the downswing. BIG DEAL. BIG FUCKING DEAL if starving African's have to listen to lectures about the dangers of casual sex or mumble along with a group prayer now and then.

I don't know whether or not "Live 8" ringmaster Bob Geldof is a sincere individual or a total fucking scam artist. I don't have any inside information on "Live 8". I can really only judge the project based on what I am able to surmise from what I see (or fail to see) reported by the media.

One thing's for damn sure. In spite of Geldof's claims that none of the artists were being paid for their performance, you can rely on the fact that MTV sure as hell took advantage of the situation by running a huge amount of commercials.

If the goal was to raise "consciousness" for the poor, heavily in debt nations of Africa I'd have to say my attention might have been riveted closer to the TV screen if there wasn't one annoying and trendy ad after another every few minutes. I've got to say I can't exactly remember seeing many complete songs by the performers. It was a mishmash of heavily edited performances awash in a sea of fashionable commercials.

Not only did MTV for damn sure get paid, think of the way that the music biz will profit from the initial broadcast and of course the endless "FEEL GOOD" reruns. It's bound to be a great boon for sales to a lot of the artists...which of course is bound to profit them in the long run royalty wise.

Let's not forget the trickle down effect that corporate (and some indie) record chains and stores will enjoy from the Live 8 "virtual infomercial". Along the way the label rep's who stock the stores and salaried employees will likely see a positive impact on their bonus checks in the long from the goodwill and attention developed for so many musicians by this "free" "non profit" event.

And of course, all the nice people involved will feel like they deserve the professional rub they get from being part of "Live 8" because after all...giving your voice to LIVE 8 means you care...right??

Well, maybe. If you really, REALLY cared...you'd clean out your personal bank account, sell your possessions and give it ALL to a charity that would give the largest cut of it to the suffering, starving, dying folk world wide. If you really cared more for the poor than you do for your career or your creature comforts, you could join the dedicated throngs of volunteers who have devoted their lives to providing one on one care and education and help.

Personally, I don't care; but there are lots of genuinely kind people who make the ultimate sacrifice and uproot their own lives to help others. I've been critical of nuns and preachers in columns before; I'm here to tell you that I admire those religious fanatics who BACK UP THEIR CONVICTIONS with actions and not career oriented rock/rap/film/TV stars and their "charitable" works that just so happen to promote their careers.

I'm not impressed by partisan political blather in association with "Live 8". The suggestion that the millions attending the concerts live all over the world are dedicated to the "cause" and have been "enlightened" is wishful thinking on the part of Geldof; only the most naive rubes world wide would believe that.

All "Live 8" has demonstrated is that once again people will turn out in large numbers to see a much hyped "free" concert to see huge stars perform. What does that prove to world leaders? Surely not concern or dedication or an awakening of interest in Africa that would likely last longer than it took to clean up the concert venues.

The savvy politicians of the worlds most prosperous nations are well aware that MTV and Live 8's audience is young and therefore impressionable on a SHORT TERM basis. Just like every generation preceding them the one that flocked to the free concerts will gradually develop increasingly conservative views as they enter the REAL WORLD and have to begin to fend for themselves and pay their own bills rather than count on Mommy and Daddy to do so.

There are good solid reasons why you can count on people to mature as they age in their 20's. Like I said, being politicians by trade, world leaders (and their staffs and advisors) know this.

THEE WHISKEY REBEL

If Geldof and Live 8 had really wanted to make a "statement" and prove that the masses at the live concerts (and therefore also a large segment of the TV audience) were sufficiently CONCERNED and not just there to see trendy live music, they would have booked African artists (as some African musicians suggested I am told) or perhaps lesser known bands who are concerned 365 days out of the year (like some outfits you can read about here in "AMP"). Attract the same crowds to see ethnic and obscure idealistic music as opposed to familiar superstars and you'll REALLY impress world leaders! Predictably, the statement made by Bono and Geldof after the G8 summit was self serving claiming direct credit for the increased billions committed by the wealthiest nations to Africa. I say HOG WASH!!

You might feel differently...and that's your privilege. I really don't give a rat's ass whether I convince you today about how these things work. I've lived quite a few years and I've observed first hand how short lived "movements" involving young people are. From the time I was a very young child I've watched the 60's hippie generation mature from drug using, free love lovin', anti-war hedonists into squares like your parents and Grandparents who preach: "do as I SAY..not as I DID". And what happened to all the Anti-Reagan "HARD CORE" Motherfuckers running around sporting leather and funny haircuts who attended all those 80's punk rock shows? You could probably buy insurance or shoes from quite a few of them. A few of the more crazy ones are dead...but like the hippies and other generations before them they just gradually GREW UP and have gravitated towards being fiscal conservatives.

No, the Live 8 audience won't be any different. Just like newly "saved" Christians from a persuasive revival meeting or a Billy Graham crusade determined pledges made in an emotional state are soon forgotten. Sunday morning commitments to Christ are usually forgotten by Tuesday or Wednesday.

Hey...whether you agree with my take on Live 8 or not...the fact is you'll soon forget about it, won't you? When your attention is drawn by another committee of do-gooders to another feel good cause you'll forget all about Africa.

OK. If you had FUN getting sucked into the undertow of the cause d'jour and felt warm and fuzzy and see nothing wrong with what you've done you won't get any argument from me. GO AHEAD. If "Live 8" gave you pleasure, as a hedonist I can appreciate that. Get any pleasure wherever you can...even if it's watching Green Day singing a horrid Queen cover song on TV or standing in a crowd of a quarter million a half mile from stage watching Madonna in the distance.

Do this though: if you feel the urge to buy any product from any of the Live 8 stars...take the money and give it to a local charity or better yet someone in your neighborhood who is genuinely poor. Urge your friends to do the same.

If you want to do more...a lot more...educate yourself and rise up into the ranks of leaders or lobbyists or advocates who can actually pull something off for the poor in far away nations. Somehow I can't help but believe that if you DO achieve that sort of power you won't have become corrupt in the process... but hey, you can try.

THEE WHISKEY REBEL: P.O.Box 1781 San Marcos, TX 78666
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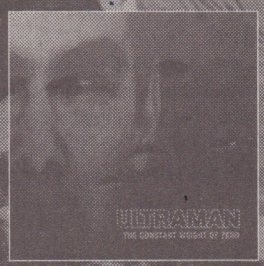
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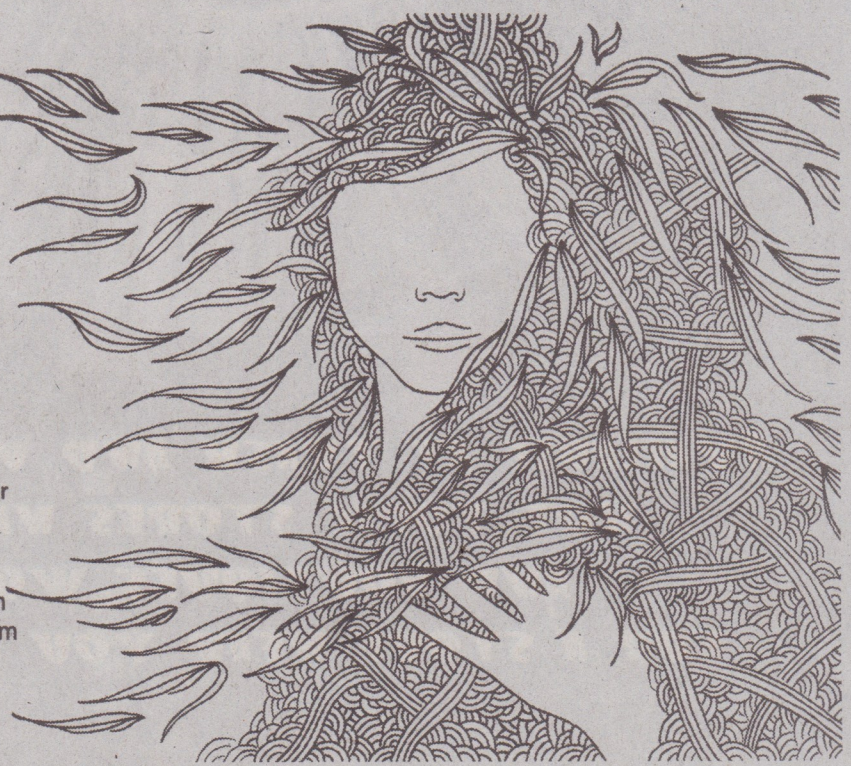
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The Black Dahlia Murder

By Tracey John / Photography By Scott Harrison

The Black Dahlia Murder's Trevor Strnad is sweatin' it. Not sweatin' it because every well-informed metalhead is holding out for the follow-up to their crushing debut Unhallowed. Not sweatin' it because the Detroit quintet is going to be on the biggest annual metal tour (Ozzfest) for the first time. Nope—the portly singer is literally dripping with bodily fluid on a scorching summer day somewhere in the Lonestar State in the midst of touring with legends like Nile and King Diamond. "I'm in Texas in the heat and it sucks balls," he says, sounding slightly agitated.

But other than the heat, the Black Dahlia Murder- comprised of Strnad, bassist Dave Lock, drummer Zach Gibson, and guitarists Brian Eschbach and John Kempainen- should be pretty psyched about what lies ahead for them. After hastily recording 2003's Unhallowed, they got to have a little more time to write and record their sophomore disc, Miasma. "We're anal retentive guys and we just wanted the recording to be better than last time," Strnad admits. "I think we've improved so much from the touring experience, and now we have a record that we're all pretty proud of."

One listen to Miasma and you'll hear why the band is so pleased: the album, which combines elements of American and Nordic death metal, is loaded with furious drum beats, elaborate guitar interplay, and Strnad's distinctive dual vocal delivery (he manages to do the gravelly growls and the higher-pitched, black metal screams). And to the delight of headbangers everywhere, it's even heavier than before, and evidently more influenced by Carcass than At the Gates this time around. "Our sound is just a melting pot of everything we like to hear in metal," Strnad says simply.

Although the dudes in the band look like chubby guys in black t-shirts, they're certainly not hardcore hacks playing metal. "The only thing that's remotely hardcore about us is the way we carry ourselves," Strnad contends, referring to the collective's open-minded attitude. "We're an approachable band; we want to be a band that you feel free to come up to and hang out with."

With nerdy-looking glasses and a self-proclaimed "pot belly," Strnad does seem like a fairly innocuous guy—that is, until you see him perform. Bare-chested and flailing into the crowd, Strnad and his bandmates shred the stage anywhere they go. "I'm just hoping that people will see that we love metal," he says sincerely. "Looking back at everything that we've been through, it's a surprise that we're even here," he says, grateful at how far the band has come. "Now that we've made it to this point, it's all downhill from here."





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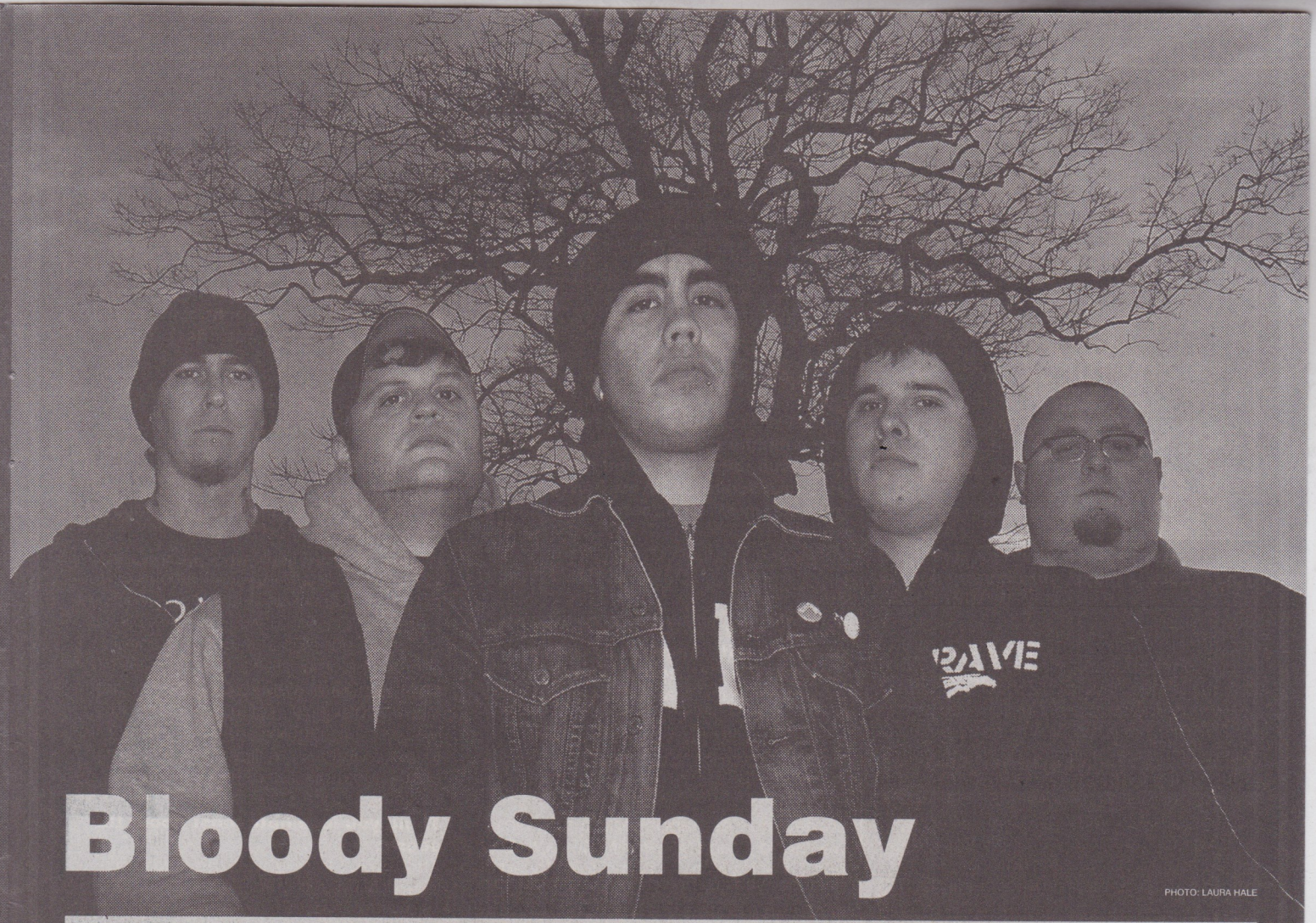
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PHOTO: LAURA HALE

By Kirby Unrest / kirbyunrest@hotmail.com

Name/band duties:
John: Guitar, internet dork, and all you can eat buffet destroyer.

The Cliff Notes History of Bloody Sunday goes like this:
Me and Greg were talking on aim one day, and decided to start a fast hardcore band. We were both in other bands, and thought it would be fun. We were only going to do it for fun, but we recorded a two- song demo and someone from our first show sent it to Facedown, and Jason flew out and saw us at our third show. He told us about Strike First, his new label he was starting and asked if we would want to be a part of it. We said yes and then a couple weeks later our original singer left and our friend Keith started singing. Then we put out "They Attack at Dawn" about three months later, and hit the road for most of 2004. About a week before we went into record the new record "To Sentence the Dead" Keith told us he couldn't do it anymore, and we had to act fast so Chris our bass player started singing, and our friend Bones came in on bass. Me and Chris sat down every night throughout the studio and the 2 weeks up to it, and wrote all the lyrics. Then three weeks after recording we left on a Five Week tour, and nowhere we are. We have been off tour for about 2 weeks and leave again for tour in two weeks, I think that is everything in a nut shell.

Does the name come from the tragic event, the U2 song, the movie or none of the above?
None of the above actually. I was in a band with a couple of the dudes from Iron Boots, and Timmy from No Justice, and we were called Bloody Sunday. That band had too many conflicting schedule issues and we had to stop doing it, and this band needed a name (after having to change it twice before) and we all liked it so I asked if they minded and no one did so we used that.

So you recently had a major change up with Keith leaving the band. What happened with that, did you always plan to have Chris take over vocal duties or was there a search for a new front man, and how are things working out with your new bass player?
Everything is working out great we couldn't be happier. Keith just didn't wanton be on tour as much, and that is cool. We are all still friends, and me, Keith, and Greg all play in a band called Tidal Wave that is going to be releasing a 7inch on Last Anthem Records later this year. We didn't really have time to search for anyone we only had two weeks but when we lost our first singer Chris had wanted to sing, but we went with Keith cause he was our friend and always around. So Chris was the only one we really would have thought of anyway.

How do you feel your latest, "To Sentence The Dead" compares to your first album? Not a whole lot of time has passed between the two. Did you just write the new material that quickly? Perhaps, a desire to showcase the new lineup? Something else?
I think it is different than the first record. When we recorded and wrote the first record we had only been a band for about 6 months if that, and hadn't been on the road at all. Now we have been a band two years, and have toured the country five times, and just grew a lot. The new record we brought in a little more influences. We didn't want to release the same record. We wanted



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PHOTO: JOHN WOOD

to show that we had grown. We took a couple months off and just practiced like 4 days a week, and wrote the record. We wrote all the music with Keith, and then we wrote all the lyrics after he left so it was kinda split up. I don't think some kids know that Keith was there writing the music with us.

What is the meaning behind the title?
"To Sentence the Dead" comes from the belief that this world is separating itself from God and increasingly becoming less moral, and the good is being drained from the world leaving it's inhabitants spiritually dead and drained. We believe that God will get tired of this and reign judgment on this world. Sentencing those who have destroyed his creation through sin. We believe that ALL of us are guilty. We believe that God has offered everyone a gift of mercy through Jesus Christ, and if you want to find out more about that story please feel free to contact us or, read the Gospel of John and Romans Chapter 8.

Is Bloody Sunday a Christian band or "Christians in a band?"
We are definitely a Christian band.

How have things been going with Facedown Records?
Things have been awesome at Facedown. God has been doing so many incredible things over there, and everyone really makes every band feel like a member of the family. It is awesome I can't imagine this band being anywhere else right now.

What lyrical topics did you cover this time around?
This time around we wanted to go more in depth on spiritual warfare, but in all honest we talk about so many things on this record. From spiritual warfare, to evolution, to friends who have given their lives to drugs, to people who turn their backs on their blood family. We tried to cover a lot of things. There is even a song about my daughter.

You recently completed a lengthy 45 date tour with Seventh Star and variousother Facedown Family members. How was that experience?
That tour was awesome we had so much fun, and got to see the Pacific Northwest which we have always wanted to go to. Every time I have been on a tour that was going there something has happened, but this time we made it, and to be with Seventh Star, and Looking Forward, and then Inked in Blood, and Clear Convictions just made it fun for us the whole time. Us and Seventh Star have toured together before, and we love those guys they are definitely one of our favorite bands to tour with.

Is anyone in Bloody Sunday involved in a side project?
Yeah me and Greg are in Tidal Wave, and then me and Julian are in a band called Daybreaker, which is a little heavier.

What is the scene like in VA these days?
The scene in Virginia is great. There are so many awesome bands coming from here and the kids are sincere. It is one of the few places left where you can do covers by old hardcore bands, and guaranteed kids will know them. Some of the bands from our area are... Tidal Wave (shameless self promotion), Iron Boots, Tarpit, Victim, The Rules, Down to Nothing, Ten33, Cast Aside, Warhead, Dead Ahead, Cutback, Municipal Waste, and so many more.

Is there ever going to be a Misura reunion?
I highly doubt it. I don't think anyone remembers that band, and most of the members are so far removed from the hardcore scene.

Bands you are psyched on right now:
Bands I am psyched on right now are Rise Against, Blue Monday, Iron Boots, Donnybrook, Killing the Dream, The Answer, and Cold World.

Funniest tour story you got:
What goes on the road stays on the road. I'll just say it involves diarrhea, our new bass player, snow storms, windy mountain roads, and no bathrooms.

Thing you love/hate most about the scene:
The thing I love about the hardcore scene is that it gives kids a place to go when they don't fit into the mainstream. It shows the world that we don't need your way of life we can forge our own. We don't have to listen to the toned down crap you constantly push on us, there is still passion out there. Ironically, the thing that I hate most about the scene today is not enough people getting involved and doing stuff the hardcore scene has spread and grown based on kids starting labels, and zines, and standing up against the powers that be and forming protests, and speaking out against the things that they see that are wrong, and not enough kids are getting into that side of hardcore, I don't want hardcore to fade into just a genre of music or a sub genre of metal. Hardcore was a counter culture, not a subculture, and I hope that kids will start realizing that and start getting involved.

Last words:
Thank you so much for doing this interview Kirby, and always looking out for using Sacto. You definitely keep true to what hardcore is about, and have always worked hard to keep things alive. Please check out "to sentence the dead" which comes out on Facedown Records, and also check us out on tour with The Hoods, Donnybrook, and Since The Flood.

RAPID FIRE

SHORT INTERVIEWS FOR SHORT ATTENTION SPANS



PROFILE: CONCOMBRE ZOMBI

Name: Mark

Position in the Band: Vocals and Guitar

Hometown: I'm originally from San Jose, California but now make my home in Austin, Texas.

CONCOMBRE ZOMBI sounds like: I don't think that we sound like anybody. If I have to sum it up, I'd describe it as heavy but soft, tight but loose, loud but quiet and in your face! Psycho Rock'n'Roll!

Our label, Hairball8 Records, is cool because: Ryan Davis. He goes the extra mile for his bands and is always straightforward with you, no bullshit. I like that because you always know where you stand. Also, with the label being in San Antonio, it is great. It is only about 75 miles from Austin and we can get together and discuss things from time to time and not have to communicate only through emails and telephone calls. More personal and very cool.

Four CD's that are influencing you the most right now: What's in my player at the moment is Helmet's "Meantime," Gorilla's "Too Much For Your Heart," Supersuckers' "La Mano Comuda" and Jane's Addiction's "Nothing's Shocking." That could all change tomorrow, know what I mean?

Best thing to do in the van is: Sleep, talk and listen to music. Also, having it quiet is very cool as well. I mean, being in the van is your downtime. It's like when you get home after working all day, relaxing on the couch with a beer, watching TV. It's "your" time and I like to take advantage of that.

Worst driving incident involved: Going to South Texas for our first show. Ralphy is from there so Destin and I drove down together to hook up with him. I missed a turn that would have got us to where we were supposed to be but instead, we ended up almost to the Gulf. To make a long story short, we made it to the gig on time and everything went great.

Austin has influenced our music in the sense that: I don't feel it has. I still write the same type of songs that I wrote when I lived in California. Yes, Austin is a great city for music and there is such a wide variety. That you can go out on any given night and see what ever style of music you want, it's unbelievable! But to say that Austin has influenced Concombre Zombi, I don't think so. Ralphy is the only native Texan in Concombre Zombi. The three of us as a whole make Concombre Zombi.

The kids these days are: Very energetic and into the music. I can remember when there were very few people into psychobilly. Thanks to them our scene has exploded. Just remember the roots of it all!

Hands down best Psychobilly Festival is: I would have to say the Big Rumble which used to be held in Great Yarmouth, England. It was a self-contained event; accommodations, venue, everything was in one location. I haven't been to Catella or the Satanic Stomp or any of the other Festivals in Europe so I can't really comment on those. From what I've heard from friends they are excellent as well. The New York Big Rumble was cool as was the Wreckers Ball. But I'll never forget the Big Rumble in the UK.

DEMENTED ARE GO or TIGER ARMY: Both are great bands. Two different styles and different sounds, both of which I enjoy.

Johnson or Bush (President, not orientation): I don't want to discuss politics. That's for a different program.

When we're not on tour we earn our living by: Ralphy currently is a student and mechanic and Destin works by promoting local bands and working other jobs. I run a printing press at a commercial printing company.

Upcoming tours or releases: Our debut full-length album "Daylight Comes" will be released in mid July and a western U.S. tour is in the planning stages as we speak. Also, we hope to hit the east coast and the rest of the country next year.

Favorite thing about playing shows: The people and the energy. There is nothing like playing live. When the people are into the music, screaming along with us, and having a great time, it can't be topped! We owe it all to them. Without their support we would still be playing at a rehearsal space with ourselves. When you get off stage after a gig the euphoria is so overwhelming that it takes hours to come down. I guess that's why we like after parties!

Band that still gives me the chills when I see them live: Led Zeppelin, on video of course!

Web info: www.concombrezombi.com



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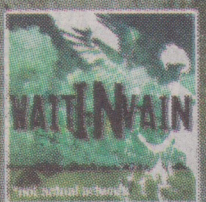
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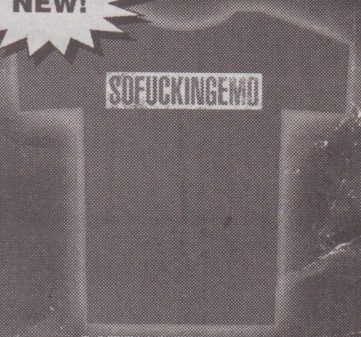
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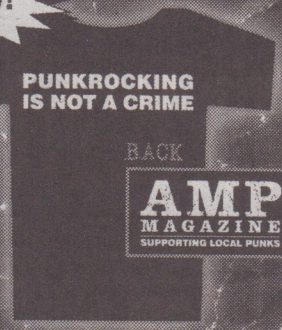
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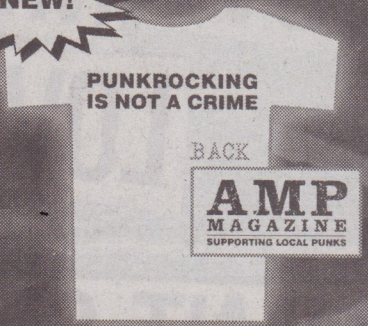
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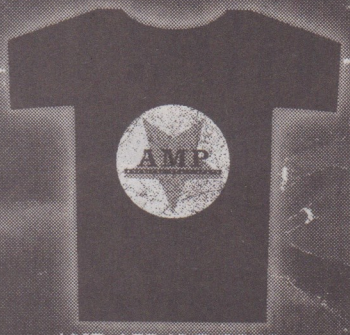


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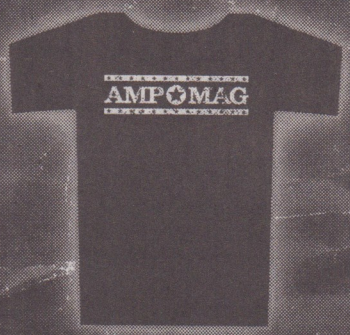
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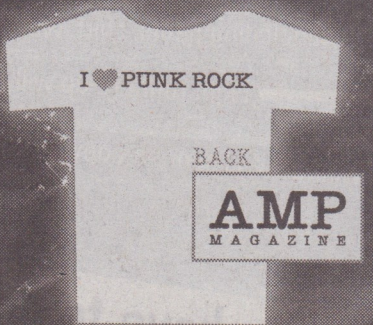
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THE GLOW

By A. Joseph Greenwald

It's Friday night in Boston and by the time THE GLOW leave the stage a crowd full of local punks and jaded hipsters will be left slack-jawed by the sheer display of raw power they've just witnessed. Their drummer, Mike "Kellzo" Kelly will be left bleeding from his hand, but it's still an hour before he will even notice. Drawing comparisons to everyone from IGGY POP to ELVIS COSTELLO, SOCIAL DISTORTION and even THE SPECIALS, The Glow are undoubtedly one of the most energetic bands to explode onto the Boston scene in recent years...

How long have you been playing and writing music together?
Kellzo: Since High School.
Scoops: Ben, Kellzo, and I used to write punk songs with our friend Mark in high school. So I'd say off and on for about six years.
Ben: We all grew up together. We've been friends forever, and been in bands with each other for just as long. We started THE GLOW sometime around early 2002. When we started, it was just Kellzo, Chris [Scoops], and I. Kellzo was living in New York City, Chris was living in New Jersey, and I was living outside Boston. It was a logistical nightmare. We played on and off with a few different guitar players, but none of them seemed to work. After a few months of complete chaos, Kellzo and Chris moved back to Boston, and we started to play with Josh. Then it all just kind of clicked.
Josh: I've been in the band for just over two years now. The boys were looking for a guitarist and asked me since we're all old friends.

So you guys used to be in hardcore bands right?
Scoops: Yeah, I guess you could say that. I used to be a very angry person and I can blame most of that on MADBALL and BLOOD FOR BLOOD.
Ben: Kellzo and I were in a bunch. The only one that people may be familiar with was a band called Brando, but even that would be a long shot. We never played outside of the Boston area.
Kellzo: Brando was the shit.
Josh: I was never into the hardcore scene. I got my start in a high school ska band and turned to the nerd rock type stuff.

Who influences you guys?
Ben: Musically? Way too many to mention. I'd say either THE CLASH or RANCID more than any other, but I'd probably change my mind in a few minutes and tell you something completely different.
Josh: William Shatner.
Kellzo: EYEHATEGOD, SWANS, NIGHTSTICK, WU TANG, and "The Greatest Speeches of All Time" box set.
Scoops: Mike Dirnt [of GREEN DAY] is who drew me into playing bass...bands like TOOTS, THE POGUES... anything honest is what influences me now.

What drew you guys to playing this kind of music? Was it a conscious decision to do something different or did it just happen?
Kellzo: Benzo just writes good songs.
Ben: I think it definitely stemmed from a collective boredom with the music scene.
Scoops: Before we became THE GLOW we were playing stuff that sounded like it could be played at the Back to the Future prom. I guess it just eventually morphed into what it is now, but it was never a conscious decision.

Did you always know you could write these kinds of songs?
Ben: No, I think my songwriting gets better as I get older. I really don't even like the songs that I wrote for the band when we first started anymore.
Scoops: Did you always know you could ask these kind of questions?

One of the words I keep hearing people use to describe your music is 'fresh'. Is that weird for you guys considering many of your influences were popular over 20-30 years ago?
Scoops: Well, I've been told by quite a few people that I'm fresh, so it's nothing new to me.
Josh: I would say more like 40-50 years ago. While we are influenced by music from an era long ago, we're not a



PHOTO: CARLA HOADE



PHOTO: JONATHAN MARDER

throwback band, so when people say our music is 'fresh' it makes sense to me because I haven't heard any other band that sounds anything like us.
Kellzo: Josh is full of shit. He likes BEN KWELLER and SELF and pop bands with pop sensibilities. That's word to everything.
Ben: All music is derivative. I don't care what anyone says. You find me a band that you swear is doing something that's never been done before, and I'll find you 100 people that will argue with you over who they're ripping off and when they did it first. It's just one big collective, progressing mess and it's existed since the dawn of man, and it will continue to exist long after I'm gone. It's hard wired into our brains. Every now and then humankind just changes the style a little and invents new instruments to play it on. The truth is, I'm not out on a crusade to change music. I'm just making music that I want to hear. I had to start this band because I was sick of listening to the radio.

Tell me a little about recording The Ghosts Are Out...
Ben: It was a really good learning experience. It was really rushed. I didn't have a lot of time to work on arrangements, and there are a million things that I would have done differently if we went around again. I guess that's just a natural reaction though. Next time around, I'm really going to take my time with it.
Scoops: It was a god time. Dave age and Ducky Carlisle really hooked us up. Kellzo and I had little under a day and a half to track all the songs so personally I felt a little rushed.
Kellzo: Dave Age did the whole record; recording, overdubs and mixing. We did two short days of "basics" at New Alliance, which is near Fenway Park. All the overdubs were recorded over a long stretch of summertime at Ducky Carlisle's studio in Medford, MA. We kind of rushed through it, but took our time, if that makes any sense.

In "I'm Never Ready" I hear echoes of Jimmy Cliff's "Many Rivers To Cross". Did you write the song about a specific person?
Ben: Some people love change. They think it's exhilarating. They look forward to it. Personally, I hate change. I put it off. I'm petrified of it. I hate changing jobs, I hate changing routines, and I really hate the feeling of knowing that I'll never be able to do something, or see someone or something again, no matter how small and insignificant it is. It completely freaks me out. Anyway, I was thinking about death. Specifically, that one day I'll die and never get to experience life again. All those things that I love, all those people that I care about, I'll never get to see them again. Ever. So that's what that song was written about, never being ready to let things go... and yeah, there is one person in particular that it's meant for.

You guys have been getting a lot of love lately on the radio and in the press in Boston. Does it feel good to get embraced by your local community just for doing your own thing?
Scoops: It feels pretty good considering that Boston is a very "hip" city. Everyone is way too cool to like music.
Kellzo: I knew that some radio stations were playing our shit cause we did an interview on WFNX. That's pretty cool.
Ben: If you've never heard yourself on the radio before, I can't explain it. It's great.

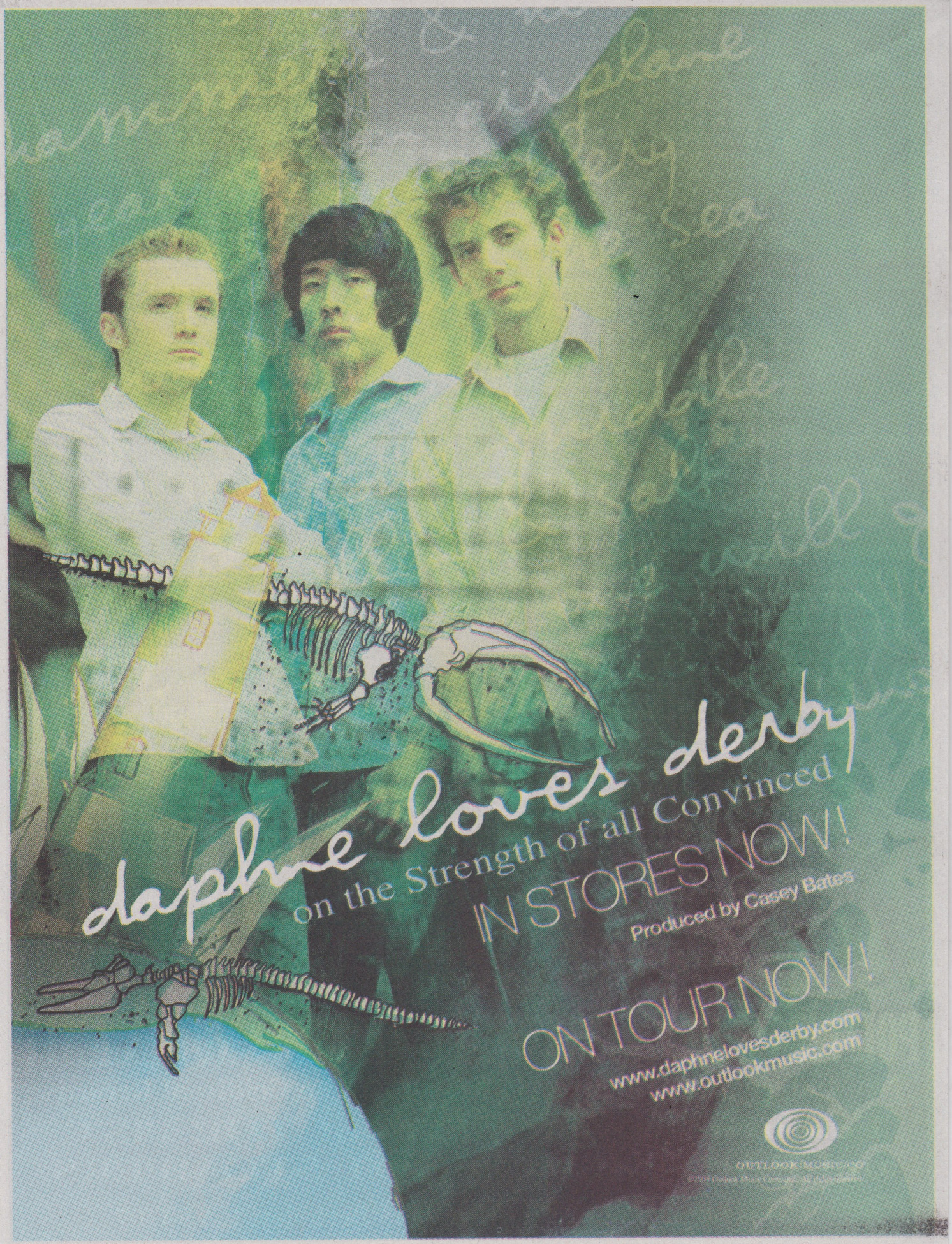
What's the one band from Boston that influenced you guys that no one outside Boston would know?
Scoops: I wish I could rattle off a bunch of bands to make myself look cooler, but I'm just not that hip. I guess if I had to name some bands I'd say POOR EXCUSE. The singer had the best stage presence. You never knew if he was going to try and fight the whole crowd.
Kellzo: Yeah, I love lots of bands that have come out of Boston. SSD, BLOOD FOR BLOOD, WILLIE ALEXANDER, THE CARS, GURU of GANG STARR, but I can't exactly say that ONE band from around here has been more influential than say, a BILLIE HOLLIDAY or a RANCID record has been. Ohhhh... BRANDO, no one knows about them. They fucking ruled and you ALL missed it.

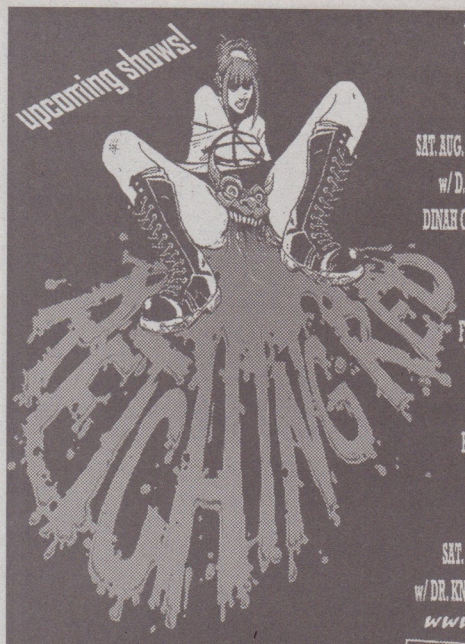
What's been your favorite place to play?
Kellzo: I love the Middle East in Boston, and Valentines in Albany. I like all ages shows though, I think they're a lot more fun, and fair, for everybody.
Ben: We played at this house party in New Hampshire a few weeks ago and I had more fun than I've had in a while. All we did was play really bad dub songs, but everyone was dancing and having a ball. Also, I love playing at Valentine's in Albany because the guy who owns it is the man.
Scoops: The Fork In Hand Guys got us on a sold out show at Axis [in Boston]. That was awesome. It was probably like our third show so we probably sucked, but I'd like to take this opportunity to thank BIG D and KICKED IN THE HEAD for hooking us up.

Are people surprised at how intense your live shows are? Your guitar player has a nasty habit of flying into the crowd and knocking over drum kits.
Scoops: I'd say that can be blamed on the fact that Josh gets drunk off two beers.
Kellzo: I'd like to think that people are receptive to us when we play shows. I think that if a band is having a good time playing music that energy will easily translate into the crowd. For me, playing live is tough because I don't like to think that I'm playing a show to entertain people. I play for myself. I have my own standards that are hard enough to live up to... If I fall off stage or puke because I'm playing too hard, it's not a fucking gimmick.

What's the deal with "THE GLOW" stenciling all over Boston?
Scoops: First of all, "Who's THE GLOW?"
Second, "What's a stencil?"
Josh: Huh?
Ben: Yeah, we don't really know who was doing that. It's so weird...

For more on The Glow check out www.theglow.com. Their debut album, The Ghosts Are Out... is out now on BANKSHOT! Records. www.bankshotrecords.com


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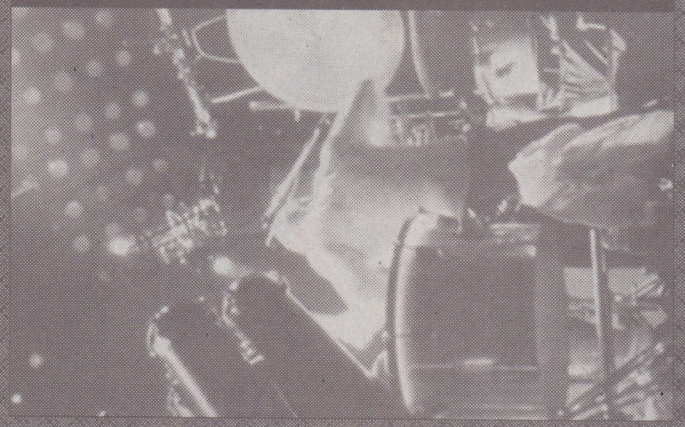
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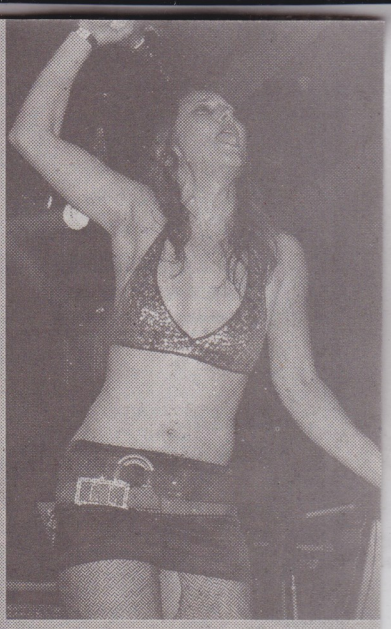
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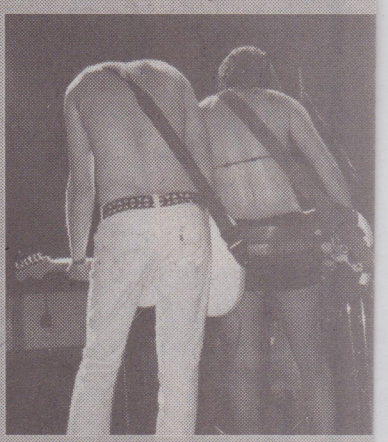
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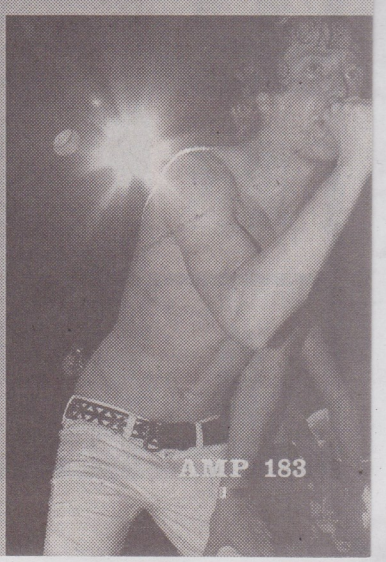




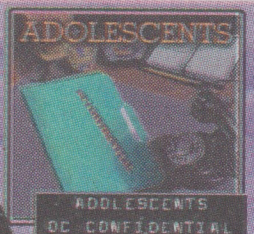








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Marathon

By Dave Rand

In the heart of New York State, spread out over several cities, the members of Marathon bide their time in between tours. The band's high-energy live shows and infectious songs have brought them a strong following in the northeast, and with their debut self-titled full length about to drop on Reignition Recordings, the band is ready to go global. Marathon has often been described as a political band, largely due to their EP, "Songs to Turn the Tide," which takes on the Bush administration, the health care system, and corporate advertising. But on their new record, the band mixes a unique blend of worldly awareness and personal storytelling that goes much deeper than most political bands these days. The same can be said for their music, which doesn't fit neatly into the punk or hardcore bin. As the upstate tundra was beginning its thaw, I sat down with Marathon vocalist and lyricist Aaron Scott to chat about substitute teaching, bands with a message, and why Marathon's new record rocks so hard.

I've noticed that on your new record, you pick some interesting song topics, ones that you wouldn't necessarily find your average band singing about, like teaching. How do you decide what you're going to write about?

I took a writing class once, for short stories, and the teacher said, "you write best about what you know." And I really took that advice on the new record. You know, the first song I wrote in my last band years ago was about the Crusades. What the fuck do I know about the Crusades? Absolutely nothing...only what I read in a history book. I'm not going to say it's not a worthwhile topic, but there's nothing I can write about that with any sort of personalization like I can about my job as a teacher.

What is it about teaching that makes for a good song topic?

When I was a student, I was everything the school system wanted me to be, totally loving the competitive nature of grades and excelling and being good at the game, and the past 8 years of working in schools have been my time to question all that. That's my current struggle in substitute teaching, just sort of identifying, okay, this is a framework, an institutional framework that everyone is forced into, and what's the best I can do working within that framework? You know, I'm paid by the government, there are clear objectives and methods that I should be following, and a very small amount of room to work with as far as what kinds of things I can do with the kids. Regardless, they have to be taught this lesson using these methods, and these types of disciplines have to be followed, and I have to negotiate all these things. Meanwhile, I'm dealing with the fact that none of these kids really work that well under this sort of system. There are a few who make it look like it's a really good idea, and I was definitely one of those kids, but I'm constantly grappling with is this working, does this makes sense, is this helpful at all, or am I totally re-inventing everything fucked up about society through socializing these kids in this framework? And I think that tension is applicable to just about any part of society and trying to identify what needs to change, how can things change, what can make things better. So while songs like "Some Lovely Parting Gifts" are specifically about my life





and teaching, I try to highlight broader connections that will hopefully resonate with the audience.

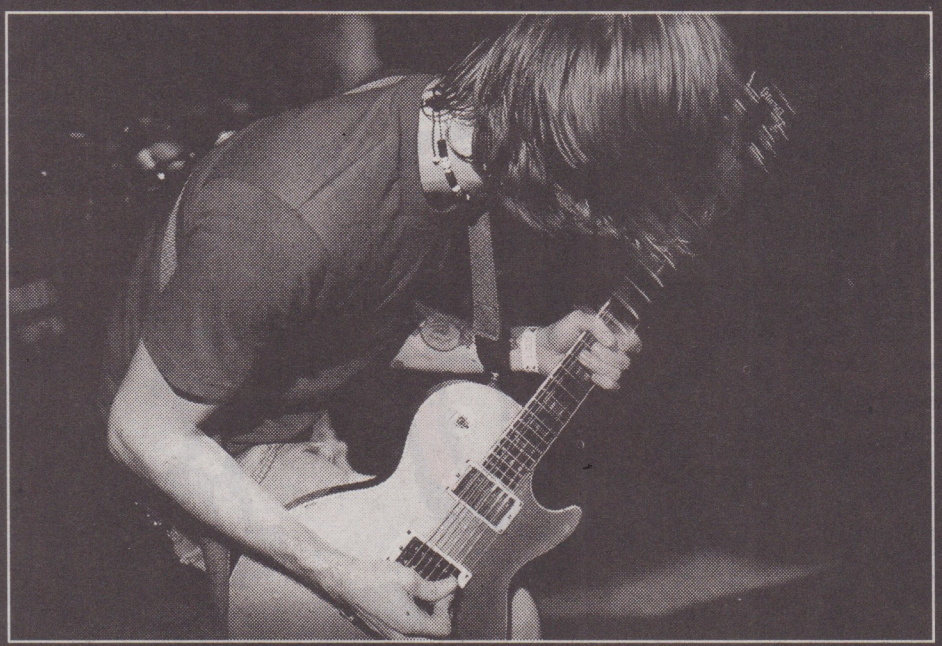
Yeah, I think that comes through. I also like the self-referential moments in "Where We Hide," when you say "we're just privileged brats and we barely understand how it feels to be oppressed."

I do think that's one of the more important points on our new record...we're singing about some topics that we don't have a lot of basis to sing about other than being concerned about them...you know, the first song on the new record could have been just a general anti-war song, but whereas I formerly would have just written that song with the message "war is bad", now I try to make that connection to us, and what our part is, as the financiers or the commissioners of war, and sort of characterize where we are in all that, because otherwise I'm just singing about people dying. I was thinking about this sitting in my backyard yesterday, enjoying a bagel while I was just chilling in the sun and someone rode past on their bike and it was very utopian and it was like, this fuckin' rules that my life is this simple, and so I think it's arrogant or misguided for me to be addressing these topics anymore without a personal touch to them. People throw around the phrase "the personal is political" a lot with music, but I don't think it really applies if you're singing about how the same person broke your heart again and again for 12 songs. I see the connection between "personal" and "political" when we're personalizing our politics. If we can get enough stories out there told by people who have diverse experiences in their lives, then maybe we'll finally get to some understanding of these things, but as long as we're having the people in power sing about the people who aren't in power and there's no actual crossover, then there's no strong relevance there for either side. So if they can't connect things that personally happen to them, then where is the relevance?

Yeah, and one thing that I







really like about your lyrics is that they're not real black and white, it's a nuanced sort of exploration of what you're talking about, because life is complicated and so if it's things that are part of your life, you appreciate that.

I just don't think that anyone is going to benefit from a re-iteration of a slogan that's on a bumper sticker, and won't find our music any more compelling than a bumper sticker. And I've tried harder with the new record to aspire to something greater than sloganeering.

Yeah, it seems like the music on the new record is a lot more sophisticated than your "Songs To Turn The Tide" EP, and the same goes for the lyrics.

I would agree with you, and I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we collaborated a lot more on this record. There was so much more focus on the quality and thoughtfulness, and it was also the first time that I shared my lyrics with my bandmates and said, okay, what works, what doesn't? (Laughs) I handed around one lyric sheet, and Emmett, our drummer, just wrote "nope." That was very discouraging, because we had already started recording, and I knew he was right, but I had to re-write the entire song in a couple days.

But that kind of input is so valuable, as long as it's people you respect.

Right, especially as a protection against things that are just bad. Like in the song "Jolly Roger", there was a point where I had the phrase "aye, matey" in there, and maybe even "scurvy dogs", just ridiculous pirate lingo that'll never fly in a song. (Laughs) And the rest of the band quickly advised me that those sucked.

Earlier, you mentioned bands singing about heartbreak...do you think those bands dilute the messages that you're trying to promote?

I think those bands only dilute their own messages, whatever that may be. If all your songs are about the same topic, then you're providing a fairly one-dimensional message. I think a lower percentage of bands now are singing about political themes or substantial themes than before, which perhaps makes it harder for some kids to find the bands with something to say, but I don't think it changes what we're saying at all.

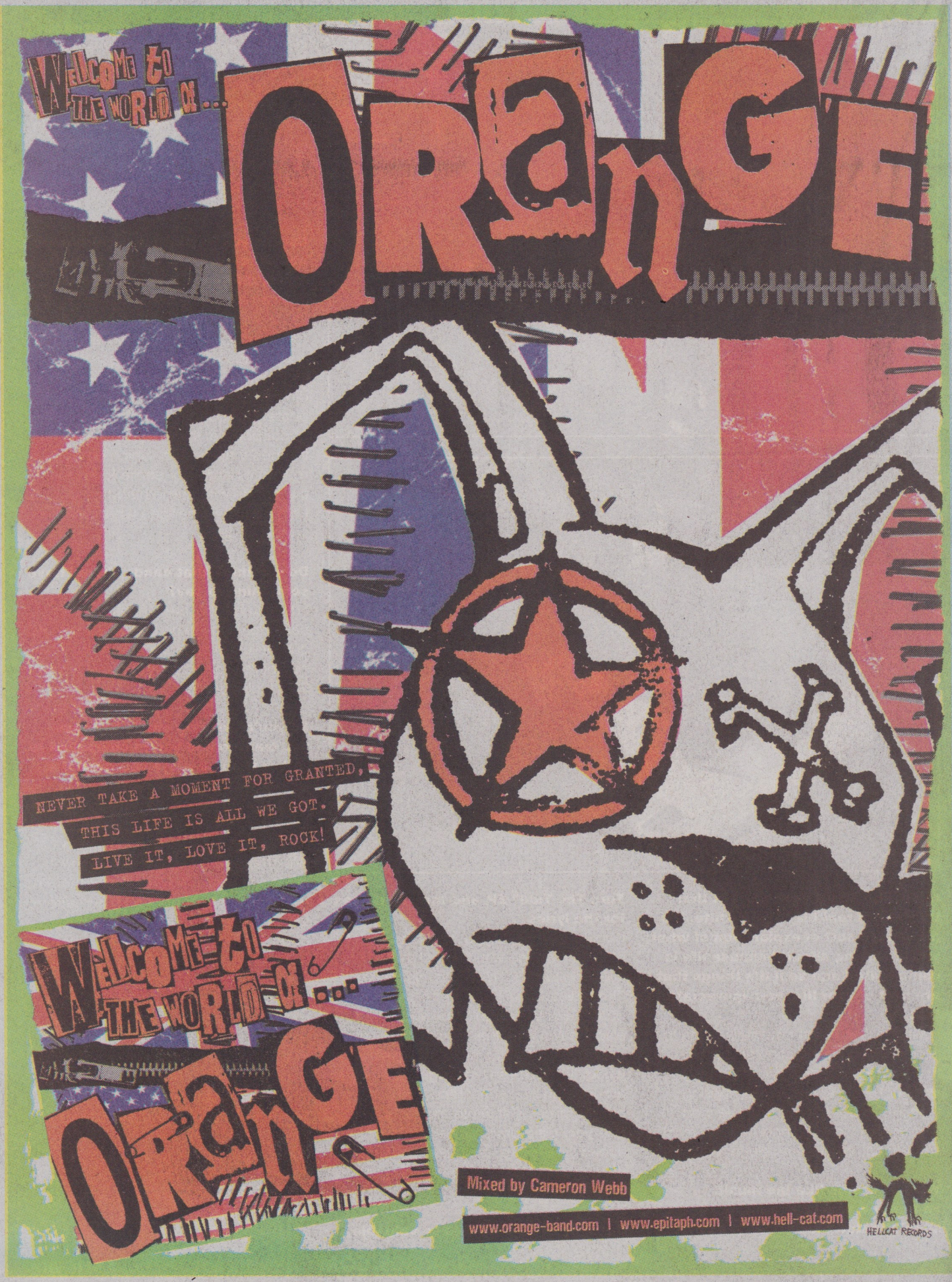
Do you think that bands should have something to say?

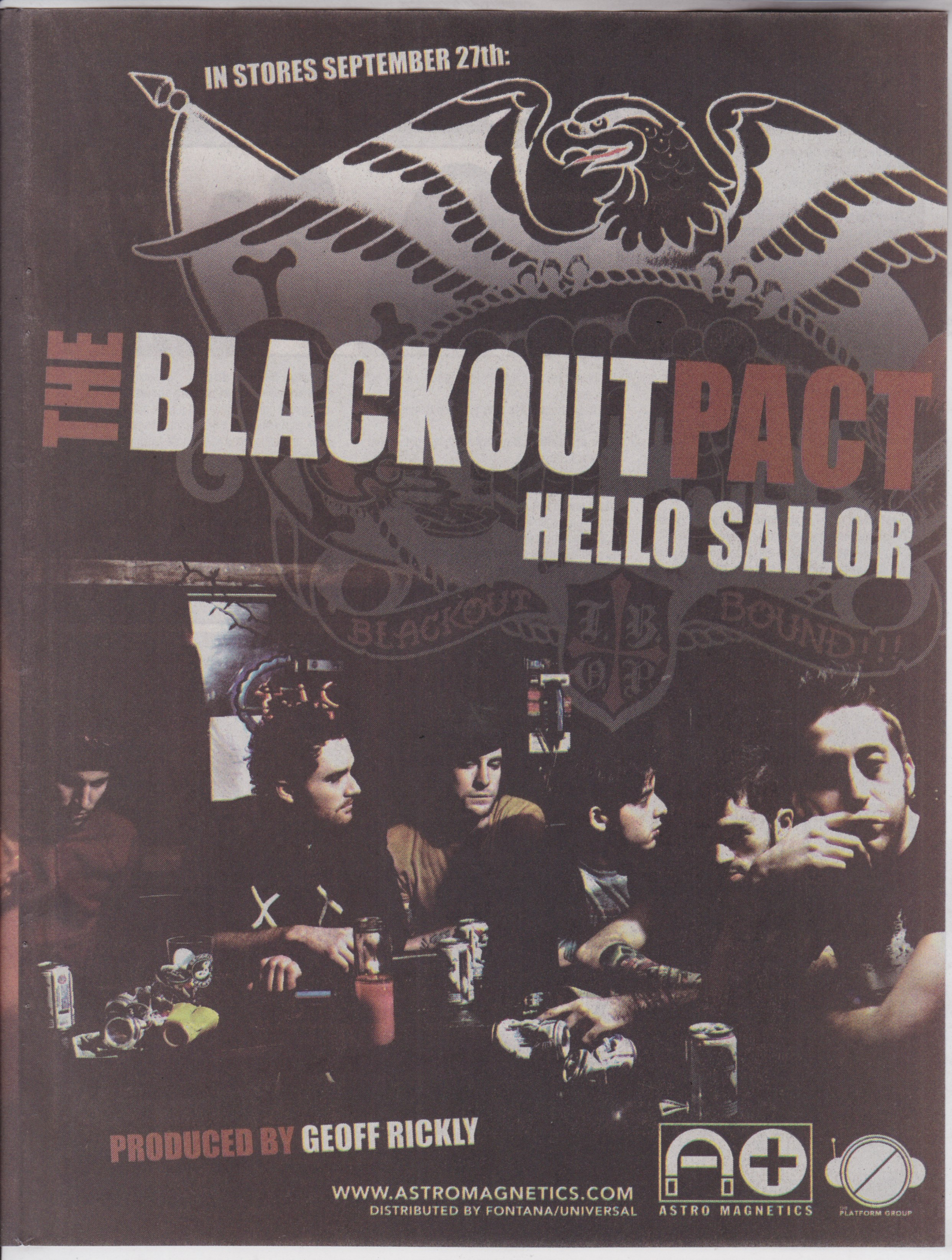
I don't know if I care, honestly. We each do what we do because we feel compelled to do it, and if you don't feel compelled to say anything in your music, then fuck it, don't.

So you're making music because you want to and you're compelled to, rather than because you think it's going to change the world?

It's not why I make music, although I also don't have any delusions that we're going to "change the world." But change and the desire to see it are part of my personality whether I'm making music or not. Justice matters to me, and I want things to be as good for people everywhere as they are for me, so that's going to come through in my music or my writing or whatever I'm putting out there, or my work...I'm going to have a hard time doing a job that isn't somehow involved in improvement of the world. Saving the world, that's just too general and huge, but making my community better is important to me, so even if I stop making music, that's what I'll be spending my time doing.

www.marathonarmy.org
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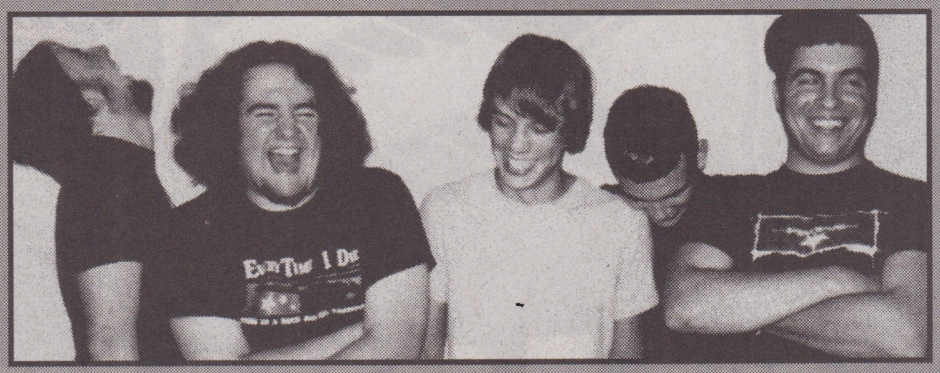

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SHORT INTERVIEWS FOR SHORT ATTENTION SPANS

Profile: Stray From The Path
Name: Tom Williams
Position in the Band: Guitarist
Hometown: Centereach, New York
Stray From The Path sounds like: I've really never been able to answer that question. We are all over the place. All of our songs are made from whatever we are feeling and writing at the time. We don't confine ourselves to any one sound and we try to never rule out different kinds of experimentation.
Our label, Five Point Records, is cool because: They put out our record, do great promotion, Ian yells at people on forklifts. Haha! The people at Five Point are seriously awesome! At the moment we wouldn't want to be working with anybody else.
Four CD's that are influencing me the most right now are:
Lars Ulrich- "Spoken Word," Seether- 'Yeah, We Got Dicks," Jon Bon Jovi – "You Gotta Breathe To Live," Metallica – "St. Anger" (unreasonably extended version).
Sorry, none of these records exists. Well, besides Metallica's, but it probably shouldn't.
Best thing to do in the van is: Haha, this question rules! Listening to Macho Man Randy Savage's "Be A Man" Hip Hop CD. Back of the car pile-on's, bags of vomit breaking, yelling at people on the Cross Island Parkway.
Worst driving incident involved: A horrible, horrible flat tire on the Mass Turnpike on our way home to NY, so bad.
The kids these days are: In love with mosh hat's and gloves.
Levis or OshKosh B'gosh? Anything tight, scene, and over $100
Yankees or Red Sox? Mets!
Slayer or Orgy? Who's Slayer?
When we're not on tour we earn our living by: Selling pool chemicals and renting trucks that are prone to catching fire.
Upcoming tours or releases: Well our record comes out August 2nd and we are doing the East coast and Hellfest in August, West coast in the fall, not sure what else.



Best Bad Religion disc? . . . The second one?
Favorite thing about playing shows: This response is going to suck, but it's the truth. After all of the hard work we put into writing songs and our live show, just seeing kids have a great fucking time during our set is what does it for me. Having people who want to spend $10 of their hard-earned money just to see us is pretty amazing. Oh yeah, I also love COMPLETELY shredding!
Band that still gives me the chills when I see them live: Coldplay and The Red Chord.
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The Red Chord

By Wilson Brown / Photography By Paul Romano

"From what I understand it's one of dirtiest cities in America," says Guy Kozowyk, singer and mouthpiece of Boston's grindcore/ hardcore kings, The Red Chord. Right now, Kozowyk is talking on his cell phone as he treads the streets of Houston looking for a late-day garage sale before the night's show.

"(But) we love playing Houston," he says. "We love the shows and the fans out here."

The above statements are very telling of his band's new album -- the relenting and hard-driving *Clients* -- released by Metal Blade Records earlier this month. *Clients* deals with the mentally ill, unappreciated and "dirty" people society would just as soon forget.

But *Clients'* shredded growling vocals, crunching guitars and galloping, never-ending double kick drums won't let us. Red Chord's latest, a concept record, details the lives and goes inside the heads of a few schizophrenic men he met while working in an "old school" pharmacy complete with a soda fountain outside of Boston.

"Each song is about a different person," he says. "Literally, it's about the clients that would walk in the store."

"A lot of materials of this record were the conversations I had with these people."

Those clients included such regulars as Antman and Black Santa, two real-life mentally ill homeless men Kozowyk met while behind the counter.

Located right next to a train station, the pharmacy/soda shop became a second home to pill-poppers, halfway house and mental facility patients, along with Antman and Black Santa who spent their days riding the trains.

"The first man was Antman, a schizophrenic," Kozowyk says. "His life revolved around waking up at four o'clock in the morning and riding the trains."

The local got his name once he sat down in the pharmacy and roaches began crawling out of his shirtsleeves and onto the counter.

"His mouth was like an ashtray. And the four or five teeth he had looked like stubbed out cigarettes."

While bugs and missing teeth might sound like sensationalist fodder, the purpose of *Clients* isn't to shock but to show.

"(Antman) died and no one knew," Kozowyk says. "It was just a matter of documenting that this guy was a human being."

"Most of those people are forgotten. The Antman had some stuff to say."

So did Black Santa, "a weird social butterfly," according to Kozowyk, Antman's friend and sometimes nemesis who had a Philly Swéet in his mouth at all times.

"I'm definitely not poking fun at any of these people with these mental afflictions," Kozowyk affirms. "I'm trying to tell their stories."

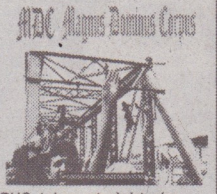
With their latest, the guys of Red Chord are also putting a magnifying glass to everyone-- not just those with mental problems -- even though Kozowyk says the album is more about those friends than it is a social commentary.

"We all have flaws. If you put me under the microscope you'll see my flaws," Kozowyk says. "I'm not excluded. We're all clients."

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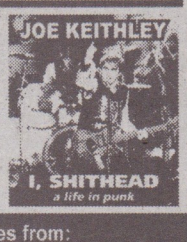
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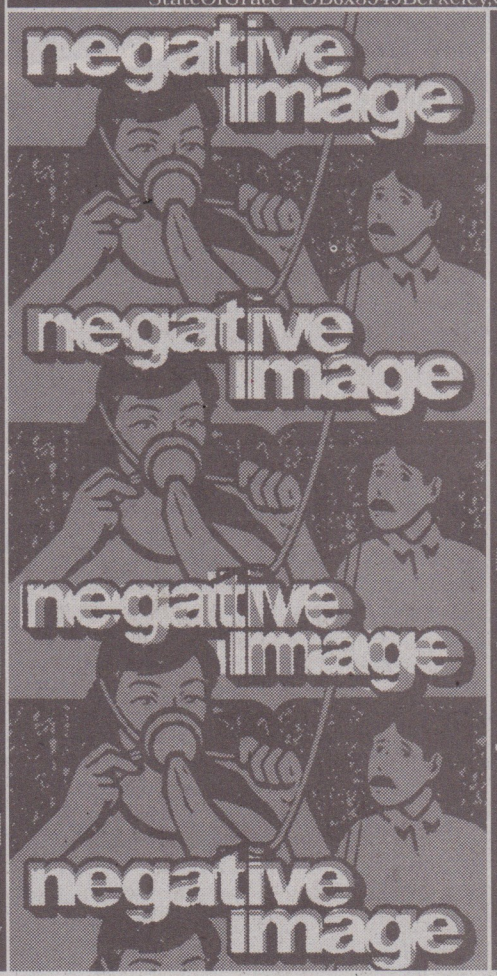
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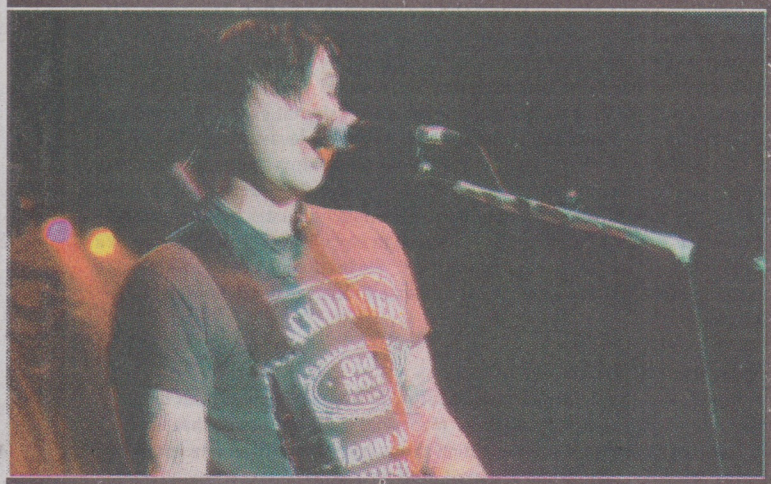
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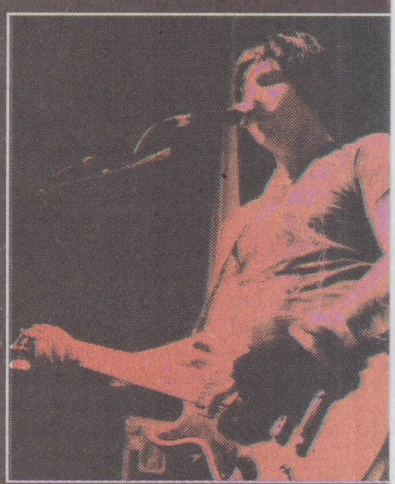
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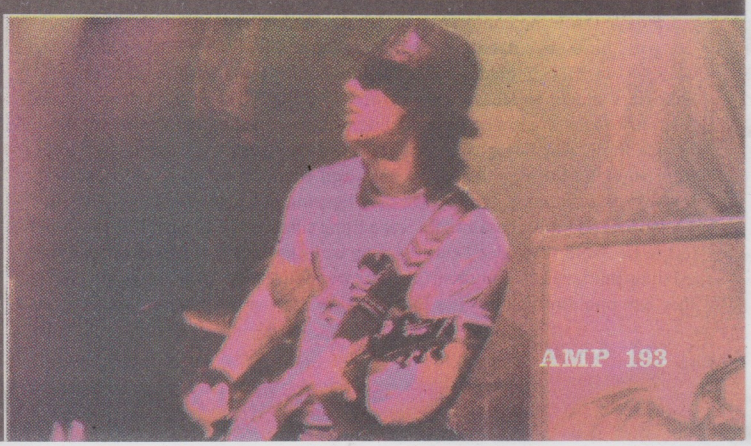












Ranting, Raving, and Rocking-Sal Canzonieri

This month's Rant:

Isn't time for a REAL third party, a true balanced Centrist party? By Centrist, I mean pragmatic. What the average level- headed person wants: just enough government to:

1.) Keep things running efficiently and effectively so that our economy prospers, 2.) regulated just enough so that we don't die by the hand of negligent crooks, and 3.) people who aren't crooks being left alone to live as they choose to. What we have today, at this turn of the century, is a fat bloated stagnate cesspool of boring, selfish, professional politicians, who are totally alienated from regular people. Both the Democrats and the Republicans have turned into parodies of themselves and each other. They are two sides of the same coin. The Far Right, the Far Left, what's the difference? They both don't want you to be happy, they both want to control not only what you do, but what you think. Both are insane mind-control police that would rather everyone die (but not them) just to prove a pointless point. The extremists of the far left wing liberals and the far right wing conservatives have caused a definitive hatred among the American people towards one another. It is apparent that if this continues that the erosion of democracy would be next logical step followed by chaos then a dictatorial police state. We truly are a nation divided as is apparent in our presidential elections (one won the vote, the other won the electoral). Neither party speaks for the people who pay the most taxes in our country. The people who's fruits of their hard work has been collected and is being flushed down the toilet in that "war" called Iraq. The people whose kids will face the full brunt of this gigantic deficit spending with a semi-permanently stagnated economy, high interest payments, high fuel prices, constant threat of terrorism with America and the world a more dangerous place, with the majority of this future nation "just making it" in the near future.

BOTH the Democrats and the Republicans are to blame for our nation's current state of zombieness (where most people just don't give a shit anymore about anything). The Republicans for letting their party be usurped by the Mayflower Mafia robber barons families and the Democrats for being the weak out of touch losers they proved themselves to be this past election season. Neither party has really anything to say, no vision, no wisdom, no sense of direction, and no leadership. Neither party speaks to us. They just take. The Republicans stab you in the belly and the Democrats stab you in the back. I, and millions like me in America, didn't work like hell to make ends meet and pay taxes for the past 30 years to have the great surplus our elbow grease created by the late 1990s all go to what!? Where did that surplus go? To pay for Iraq? For BILLIONS of our sweat and blood soaked EARNED dollars going to pay for a giant waste of time and money, a place where we weren't asked to go there to "help" and a place that in the long run hates us and will one day be our enemies in the coming World War III against the Moslems? Fuck that! A place were our young men and women soldiers are being picked off one by one just because some cowboy president wants to one up his Dad so that he can show him who much of a real man he is and not only that but a better man than him cause he "won" a "war" that his father didn't (one that cost his Dad a re-election).

We need a Centrist party because there is no more representation for us in the government. Our day to day life is no longer important to people who are out of touch with the common man. What's the big issues that our illustrious Congress have been debating about so far this year: Stem Cell research; whether the plug should be pulled for that poor Florida woman, and whether filibusters should be allowed or not. Wow, BIG FUCKING DEAL! I'm soooo glad that our tax dollars are at work dealing with these super-important issues!

Fuck that! Way to focus on the unimportant issues. You wanna stay away from important things like health care and economy as much as possible, it would be too messy. Why aren't they figuring out how we can get OUT of being dependent on Fossil fuels, especially since there is only 100 years of oil left to be used! Why aren't they dealing with the fact that China is building up their military arsenal, their nuclear weapons, their troop strength, so that they can one day kick our ass just when we are too drained and looking the other way. Why aren't they really dealing with the issue that we have new enemies, the Moslem fundamentalist nation, and the world will no longer be secure in one's daily life unless things change? Why aren't they working on how our youth will be educated so that they will be able to even have a job in the near future that won't be outsourced overseas! Why aren't they doing something about government fraud, waste and abuse and how well they will guard our federal moneys against pork? This year alone there were 10,656 projects in 13 appropriations bills totaling more than 22.9 billion dollars. Does anyone in Congress really give a damn about us? They are too busy making sure tons of pork is being tacked onto every new bill being proposed, so that their "pals" will get what they lobbied for. Lobbying! If there ever was a joke, it is lobbying, which is essentially legalized BRIBING, it is influencing the decisions of the decision makers, when these decision makers should be deciding what's best for the PEOPLE that live in America. Ted Bridis, AP writer put out an article last year detailing why a request for the Justice Department's Foreign Lobby database could not be turned over to the press under the Freedom of Information Act. The reason? Thomas J. McIntyre claims: "Implementing such a request risks a crash that cannot be fixed and could result in a major loss of data, which would be devastating". The FILE IS TOO HUGE! And, that's just the Foreign lobbyists! Imagine all the domestic ones! The time has come to find the middle ground and elect representatives that will do what is best for the nation as a whole not just special interests or lobbyists or corporations. It is supposed to be "WE THE PEOPLE" not "We the Politicians" or "We the Democrats" or "We the Republicans". We need elected people that are willing to kick ass and roll over the dead weight in Congress.

This months Rave:

I have to say that I have to rave about www.myspace.com at least once this lifetime. Officially, Myspace (or MySpace) is a free service that uses the Internet for online communication through an interactive network of photos, weblogs, user profiles, e-mail, web forums, groups, as well as many other communication devices. This all-inclusive service is sometimes called a social networking interface. It is an active site always updating or creating new features for their members. Great! What that all means is that you can communicate with everyone and everyone's friends, and everyone's friend's friends, etc., and thus reaches thousands of people that are already interested in what you have to say or they wouldn't be there in the first place. Many bands are saying that they have gotten so many new fans from setting up a band profile at Myspace.com. AND, most importantly, and I have experienced this with my own band, Electric Frankenstein, LOTS of new people coming to your live shows! Which is very cool in today's day and age! Bands from Queens of the Stone Age to the most obscure local band are all on there, making contact with people who actually want to be contacted from them, no junk mail!

There are tons of girls at Myspace, which attracts tons of guys, which attracts lots of bands, which attracts lots of fans, and everyday this network grows exponentially!

You can post bulletin to your network, you can solicit for more friends (people who are part of your network), you can post comments, send email, check out blogs, and post concert dates, and lots more. Someone this site really took off in popularity, being at the right place at the right time. Most people in the networks communicate with each other now via Myspace.com mostly, instead of sending emails from their email service. People meet each other there and date, people get lots of new friends who are also into what you are into, and so on. Try it, you'll like it! Just be smart and don't reveal too much personal information about you (address/phone/school/etc), especially if you are a young kid! Not too safe!

What's Rocking:

Hey, if you are into Sleaze Rock, then there are some cool bands that you can check out! WHAT IS SLEAZE ROCK? Sleaze rock is the bastard child of heavy metal, music that is rebellious, aggressive and downright nasty! The

Ranting, Raving, and Rocking-Sal Canzonieri

Black Oak Arkansas bands of today, long haired, tattooed, tight boots, black leather and denim clad, biker boots, and motorcycles!

1. The Crank County Daredevils - a righteous heavy blast of heavy rock! Described as the most sleaziest, raunchiest and most rockin' Hollywood-style street-metal band from Asheville, North Carolina. Their songs are raw enough for the Punk Rock n Rollers to get into and well crafted enough for fans of heavy street rock to love as well. Lots of fun for the leather and denim crowd that wants a fast-living and hard-rocking band to crank up the High Energy Rock n Roll to drink beer by. They are starting to get lots of great press, half cause of their killer Rock n Roll looks and half cause of their killer Rock n Roll music. Their website says they are "Dressed in Nikki Sixx hand-me-downs and drooling with a demonic appetite for sex, drugs and rock-n-roll, the loud-and-lewd Crank County Daredevils owe their filthy souls to the gutter-glam sounds of Motley Crue, Guns 'N Roses, W.A.S.P. and Backyard Babies." Sounds great to me! Check them out at: http://www.crankcountydaredevils.com/ where you can buy their new CD: Kings of Sleaze

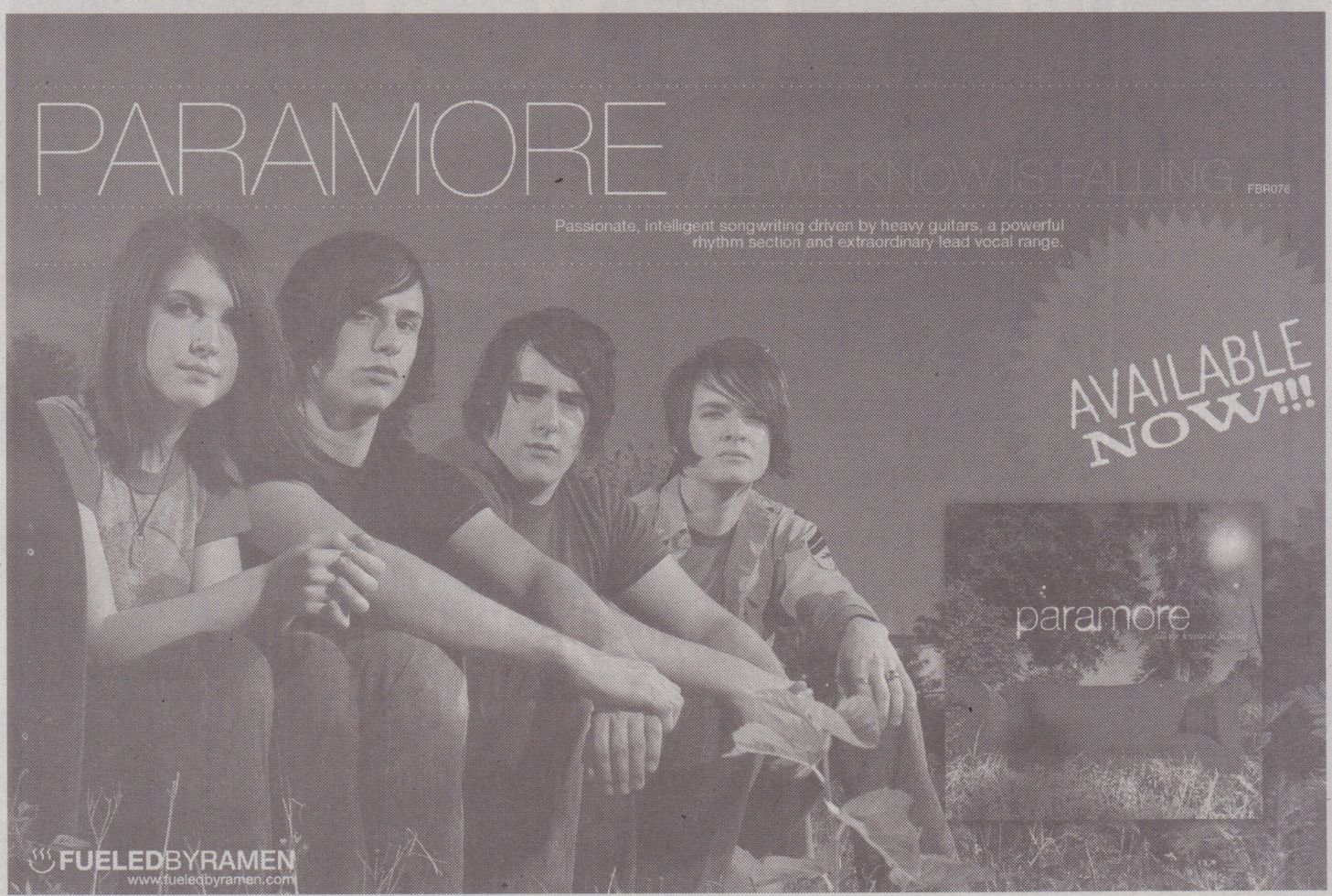
2. Broken Teeth - If you love bloody-knuckle, rawk 'n' roll that will bust your chops with all the bottle-smashing bravado of barroom bad-asses like AC/DC and Rose Tattoo, then this is the band for you! Hailing from Austin, Texas, Broken Teeth is comprised of former members of Dangerous Toys, Dirty Looks and Pariah. These guys released their self-titled first album in 1999 and just made their new one. Pure three chord mid tempo hard rock that Bon Scott himself would have approved of. Only non-trendy Texas would have begotten a band like this! Check them out at: http://www.brokenteeth.com/ where you can buy their new CD: Guilty Pleasure

3. Spread Eagle - Don't think just the USA has dibs on raunchy Rawk, Vancouver Canada is home to Spread Eagle, a really juicy Punk Rock n Roll band along the lines of Grand Funk Railroad meets the Sex Pistols! They have been described as Kick-ass sleazy devil-fueled rock 'n' roll by their fans. Check them out at: http://www.spreadeagle.ca/ where you can buy their new self-titled CD.

4. Amps II Eleven - This super fuzzed out Rawk Punk band is one of the best new bands coming out of Cleveland Ohio in a long time! More music for heavy drinking and heavy Bar BQing! Ripping roaring fuzzed out super muscle rock with a nice dose of Punk Rock irony and attitude, these long haired write wall of guitar power blasts that are great to drive to. Their website says that their music reaffirms the Midwest's grip on real, dirt-beneath-the-fingernails rock and roll. Can't argue with that! Check them out at: http://www.amps2eleven.com/ where you can buy their new self- titled CD.

Don't forget other Raunch Rawk N Roll bands that I have mentioned in past columns: Ironhead, Ironboss, On Parole, and Drag Citizen! By the way, all these bands will be featured soon on Volume 13 of the "A Fistful of Rock n Roll" compilation series, which will be a 3 CD set!

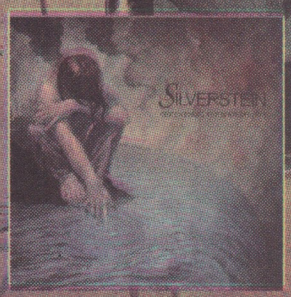
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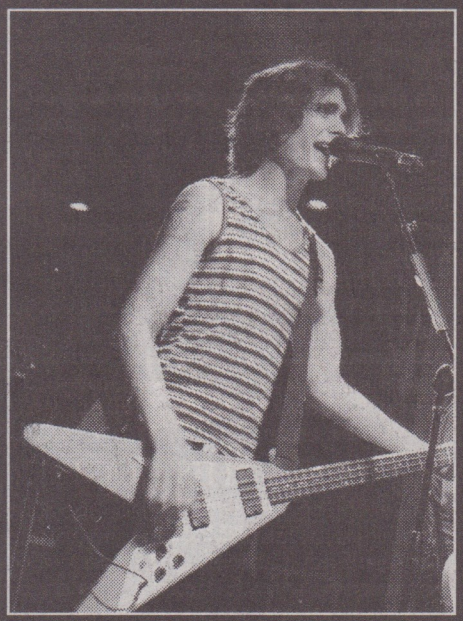


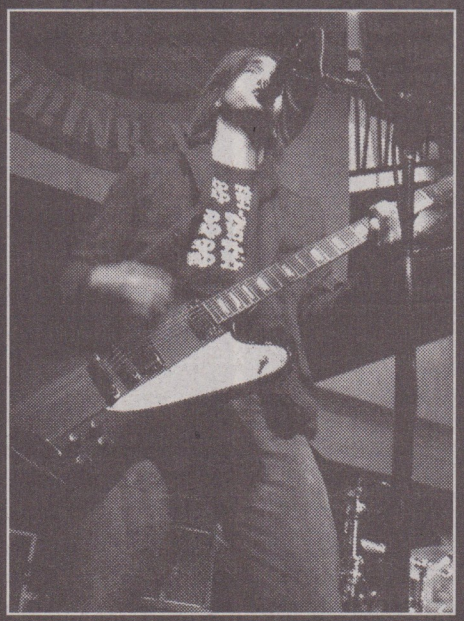
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VICTORY RECORDS

The All-American Rejects







By Tracey John / Photography By Joanne Vitale

"Tyson, will you marry me?!?!?!?" Outside of Fuse's television studios in midtown Manhattan, a black van pulls over to pick up the All-American Rejects- bassist/singer Tyson Ritter, drummer Chris Gaylor and guitarists Nick Wheeler and Mike Kennerty. And their ride arrives not a moment too soon: as Fuse's Daily Download show wraps up, a few stragglers from the audience (who happen to be of the young female persuasion) remain, hoping to snag a photo or an autograph. Luck seems to be on their side as the boys gladly oblige until each and every fan walks away with a souvenir and a smile.

"A lot of our fans are just giggly girls," Ritter admits of the Rejects' devoted followers. "But I think if you rewind back to the '80s and see who was going to Bon Jovi and Def Leppard concerts, you'll see a lot of girls," he argues. "It's always a boy band if there are guys in a band," he says modestly. But not every band can generate excitement like the All-American Rejects. At the sold-out New York City stop of their headlining tour that same night, it seems like the foursome's fan base has grown exponentially—and they're not just giggly girls. Not bad for a group that hasn't put anything out in almost two years. And just what took them so long to follow-uap their platinum-selling, self-titled 2003 debut?

"We had to write a great second record," Ritter states matter-of-factly. "We did our best to perfect every song until we thought it was where it needed to be. I'm not sure if we did that or not, but I'm so proud of it, I don't care if it sells a single copy." But judging by the crowd's hyperactive response to their live performance, the Rejects' new disc will definitely move a few copies. While Move Along still bubbles with the pop hooks, punk riffs and sing-along anthems that make up the Rejects' signature sound, it has a slightly more aggressive, rock edge. Perhaps the more forceful attitude on the record can be attributed to the fact that Ritter's heart wasn't broken this time around—or at least not as much.

"I've had a great time the past two years and I'm not so melancholy anymore," the singer reveals, "although there are a couple songs about past experiences." As the band's core lyricist, Ritter intentionally wrote lines that were a little more "vague" so that listeners could relate better to their songs. "I am not trying to go eight layers deep with my lyrics," he contends. "I don't like people to think that hard and it's more fun if you can sing along to it."

Their songs may be fun to sing and dance to, but they also mean a lot to Reject fans, sometimes more than we know. Kids have come up to the band to confess that their music is the only thing that keeps them going. "Whether it's bullshit or completely true, the fact that they come out to the show means a lot to me," Ritter says earnestly. "I love it when there's a 13 year-old girl and she tells me that we are her first concert," he continues gleefully. "Even if it's a guilty pleasure a few years down the road, she won't ever forget it," Ritter says, laughing. "I want kids to come back. I want to keep them for life."

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CLEARVIEWKILLS

By Patrick Fulton

For a band that's been around for what seems to be a short amount of time, ClearviewKills has gained quite a bit of popularity in their hometown area. Originally forming in late 2002 as friends who just wanted to play music together, Drew Donegan, Dan Garrighan, Ed Palko and Trevor Gwillim saw a major lineup change little over a year later when their lead singer stepped down. Searching for a new band to replace the locally popular and recently disbanded Better Off Dead, Will Perza took the reigns as ClearviewKills' new vocalist, giving the band an unquestionable stage presence and a powerful voice.

Wrap This Around Your Neck, the band's latest EP, reveals a tight sound that the band has worked hard to perfect while playing to large crowds around the Pittsburgh area. I recently spoke to guitarist Drew Donegan about all things ClearviewKills related.

Tell me a little bit about *Wrap This Around Your Neck*.
Well, some of the songs that actually made the EP were really old. We haven't released anything but demos up until this point. For example, "Lost and Lonely" was on a demo we did in early 2003. A majority of the songs on the new EP were written last year and were never demoed. We were lucky enough to get to go to the world famous Clubhouse (Murder By Death, Voice in the Wire, Fountains of Wayne) to record the record with Daniel James Goodwin. We were there over our Christmas break for six days.

For only having released demos up until this point, you guys seem to have built a decent fan base around the Pittsburgh area. What do you attribute that success to?
I would have to say that our live show really gets us over with a lot of people. We give it our all when we play live, and we have a pretty cool light show. Maybe everyone just likes watching the lights! We've also been able to play with a ton of national bands over the past year thanks to all of the great promoters in and around the Pittsburgh area.

Pittsburgh has seen two of its midsize venues close in the past two years, what was it like for you guys to see those venues close?
Oh, totally. John Rinaldo, the owner of Joker Productions in Pittsburgh, really took care of us. He put us on just about any large show he could for around a year at both Club Laga and The World. It was terrible seeing both of those venues close.

Going back to *Wrap This Around Your Neck*, who handled the writing?
Dan is the mastermind behind most of the songs on the record. Everyone puts in their two cents, but he's responsible for the backbone of the songs. Both Will and Dan shared the lyric writing on the EP.

Which song or songs are you most proud of on the newest EP?
My personal favorites would be "Sleep With the Light On" and "Goodnight." But those are the songs that I wrote, so I might be biased! I also really like "The Stereo." "Goodnight" is my favorite song to play live, so I don't know. It's hard to narrow it down.

Can you liken your sound to any one band, or would you say that you guys have a certain sound?
It's weird; I don't think any of us listen to the music that we might be categorized as. We all grew up listening to bands like Rancid, NOFX, The Suicide Machines and so on, and still do listen to them for inspiration. I guess when you boil it down, we're a punk band, with some modern influences. I don't really like all the sub-genres anyways. They're starting to get a little out of hand, don't you think?

Trevor, one of the founding members, recently decided to leave. Was there any kind of underlying situation regarding his departure?
He decided that he has been going at this for far too long and felt like he needed to move on with his personal life. He's decided to go to college and focus on school full-time.

What are you guys trying to map out for the future?
We are looking for a label who might want to do a one-off and re-release our latest EP, mainly because we want to have some sort of larger distro than what we can handle ourselves. We also have several label showcases coming up this fall while we do the final Berlin Project tour. After that we are hoping to be back at a studio by next winter. We already started writing stuff that will blow anyway anything on the EP, so we are looking to do a fast turnaround.

ClearviewKills' latest release, Wrap This Around Your Neck, can be purchased from Interpunk.com. You can find more info on ClearviewKills at: www.clearviewkills.com



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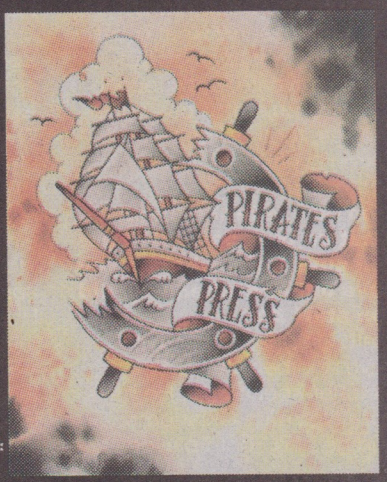
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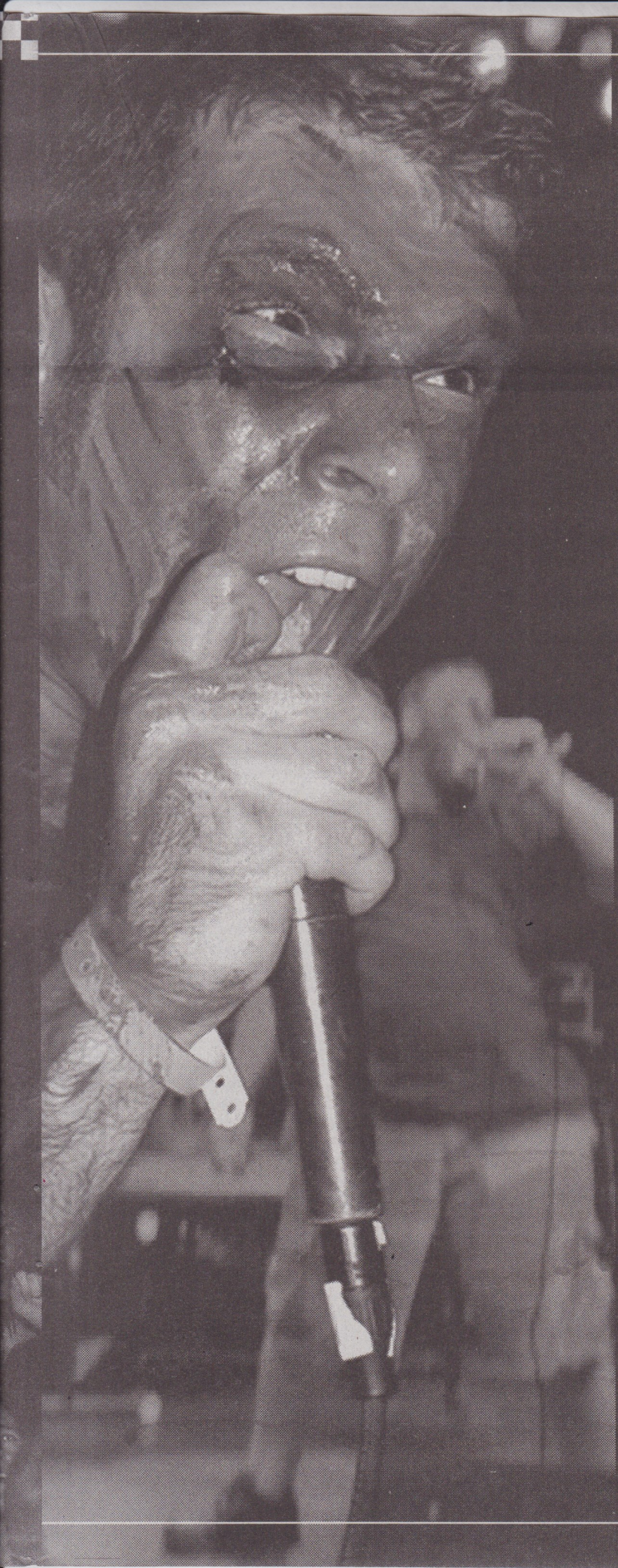
ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

By Kirby Unrest / Photography By Starr James (Returntothepit.com/ TheUndergroundScene.net)

If you wouldn't mind introducing yourself, band duties, and of course, all time favorite zombie flick?
Matt: I wouldn't mind at all- in fact, it would be my pleasure. My name is Matt Fox, I write music, occasional lyrics, and play guitar for ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE. My favorite zombie flick? Well, I am probably the least versed of ZA's members in zombie/horror movies (at 32 years old horror films still scare me), but I have seen Night Of The Living Dead and I sure liked that a bunch. It was so effective I even had to stop eating while I watched it. I also enjoy House and Army Of Darkness, which both feature zombies, though I don't think zombie afficianados would consider those "zombie flicks".
Ronen: I'm Ronen Kauffman. I'm responsible for most of the band's lyrics and vocals. And as far as my favorite zombie movie... That would probably be Dead Alive – not necessarily what most people might think of, but still my favorite. Let's face it, most zombie movies – most movies, for that matter – aren't very good.

Who else is in the band, what do they do, where are you guys from, what do you have out and when/why did you start ZA?
Matt: On bass guitar, we have another Matt- Matt Fletcher specifically. He hails from Norman, Oklahoma, and he and I both played in the band formerly known as SHAI HULUD. Our other vocalist, Eric Dellon AKA Dellonor, is from Connecticut and in addition to ZA, he also sings for his band, SHALLOW WATER GRAVE. On the other guitar is our friend, Greg Thomas- also from Connecticut. He plays in CT's current Hardcore/Metal darlings THE RISK TAKEN. On drums we have Tony Alvez from Poughkeepsie, NY. Tony has played in many bands throughout the years, and consequently has great taste in metal.
As it is with most bands, ZA started off as an idea and a joke. Matt Fletcher loves zombie movies and stories about the forthcoming apocalypse. While we lived in Florida, back in 1999, we were in a used book shop at opposite ends of a shelf reading off book titles that we thought each other might be interested in. I read off the title (it was something to the extent of) "From Dirt They Rise For Apocalypse They Bring," and very much to the dismay of an excited-as-a-school-girl Matt Fletcher I quickly followed up with "Just kidding". If Zombie Apocalypse was spawned from anything, it was from that conversation. The obligatory "We should start a band called ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE!" talks started, and I guess it never stopped. I had a couple ideas for fast and thrashy songs that wouldn't fit into HULUD's style, so we gave them to the idea of ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE and that laid the groundwork for our first EP. In 2000 we recorded the music for said EP. We had











no idea we would really do anything with it until we saw Ronen singing for his band at the time, TRY.FAIL.TRY (NJ's most underrated band ever). After we met, we asked him to join. Now, some years and many tears later we are almost a real band. Ha!

Ronen: Yeah, weird, right? As far as what we have out. Well there's the EP on Indecision, called *This Is A Spark of Life.* It came out as a limited seven inch as well. We contributed a song to a Guns n Roses tribute that came out on Reignition/Law Of Inertia, but I wouldn't consider that a release, really. But people seem to like to talk about it, so maybe I'm wrong about that.

What led you to sign with Dave Mandel/Indecision, and when is a follow up to *This Is A Spark Of Life* coming out?

Matt: Dave Mandel had been a friend of mine for a few years. I was always interested in releasing something on Indecision, and likewise, Dave

was interested in releasing a band I was in. It was a solid match. To boot, ZOMBIE's sound fit in very well with Indecision's parameters, and... uh... no one else wanted to release it. (laughs)
Ronen: As far as a follow-up... The next record is called *Tales Told By Dead Men*, and it's a split with a band from the UK called SEND MORE PARAMEDICS. That record comes out some time this summer, on Hell Bent in the U.S. and In At The Deep End in Europe. We're quite excited about it – it's us, but newer and different.

Lyrically, it seems that you take themes/imagery from horror/zombie films, but there is a definite undercurrent of political thought, social conscience and emotional drive. Was/is that your intent?
Matt: The original idea for ZA's lyrics was to be complete cheese and schlock- a gory horror motif. Once the music started taking shape, we saw there was a maturity to the songs so we decided to theme the lyrics, but keep them meaningful and relevant. We thought a band named ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE could actually have a unique impact if done properly. Ronen made sure of that.
Ronen: You're making me blush, dude. As far as the socio-political content – on my part, I will say that it's all completely intentional. I got involved with this kind of music largely because it had valuable content, lyrically. Aggressive music and melody and moshing are important, but when it's all said and done, I care much more about ideas – big ideas. And writing lyrics for a band is a great way to force yourself into figuring out what you actually have to say. There are enough songs about hating girls and being macho. I want a lot more than that. The music I love deserves a lot more than that. I try to take advantage of the opportunity I have, to write words that I think matter. Most people don't ever get a chance to communicate to a real audience the way ZOMBIE can. I want every word to count, to me at the very least.

Who created the artwork for *Spark Of Life* and how can people check out more of their work?
Ronen: That painting is by a guy named Dan Henk who lives in New Jersey. I don't know if he has a website, but you can Google his name and find out about him.

I've read a few reviews on *Spark Of Life* and at least a couple noted their distaste for the production. Either it was noted as being too "raw" or just sloppy. What are your thoughts on the recording? Did you want something raw (a comment I'd agree with) and do you feel it's sloppy, or could be viewed in such a manner, or was it just a poor studio experience that you had?
Matt: Let's be honest here, the production is pretty bad. *Spark Of Life* was recorded by our good friend John Naclerio, who at the time had a studio that was in its beginning stages. It was in his basement and he had limited equipment/tools to work with. We knew the production would be rough, but we were so confident in the songs that no one seemed to mind. As far as being sloppy, hey, I don't think it's too bad personally. As many times as I punched in on every song it better not be sloppy. The overall experience was great, however. You can only have a great experience while working with John- he's a charming, talented, and patient engineer. Check out his new studio, which is all fancy schmancy-like now (www.nadarecording.com).
Ronen: I'll just add that lots of my favorite records and songs don't have the best recordings in the world – far from it. And although it had a lot to do with what technology was available at the time, I will say that those old lo-fi recordings of bands like MINOR THREAT and CRIMPSHRINE are untouchable in some ways. Not to equate ZA to those bands in the least, but there is something to be said for those sort of natural imperfections. What is "perfect," anyway?

You've got current/ex members of SHAI HULUD/WARMTH OF RED BLOOD, THE RISK TAKEN, etc involved in ZA. Is this band just a side project of those groups, or do you guys plan to do something more full on presently and/or in the future? How do you feel when people refer to ZA as "that SHAI HULUD side project"? How have the other members' bands affected the touring/recording schedule of ZA?
Matt: Though ZOMBIE isn't as full time as the bands you mentioned, we all take the band seriously- however we definitely don't treat it as a full time band. To call it a side project would be ultimately untrue- a more accurate term might simply be part-time. Sure, I'm splitting hairs here, but the term side project has the implication that we don't take it as seriously as our other bands, which we do, just not as often. I would love to get ZOMBIE as active as possible. At this point I couldn't say how full on it could be, or when in the future that would be able to take place. We are currently, and slowly, writing for a full length and every member has expressed interest in touring/playing on a somewhat regular basis.
Ronen: I am also a teacher, so that is a big factor in how active we can be at any given moment. I like to think that what we do, we do as best we can – we make it count each and every second we are together. Personally, I am not of the belief that a band needs to be "this" or "that" in order to be considered legitimate. They should do what they want to do – we go to pretty great lengths to be ZA, considering we are spread across three states and all have other, pressing commitments. As for the side project thing... well. I kind of cringe when I hear ZA described exclusively as a side project, because to me, the bands are quite distinct from one another.
Matt: The SHAI HULUD side project reference is inevitable. The bands do have similarities, and hell, we share members, but ZOMBIE definitely has a musical and lyrical personality of its own, and where it might



resemble HULUD in certain aspects, there are clearly characteristics of ZA that are not in any way shared by SHAI HULUD. I do hope that is recognized. Thus far our other bands' schedules have not had an affect on ZOMBIE. It's drastically the other way around in fact.

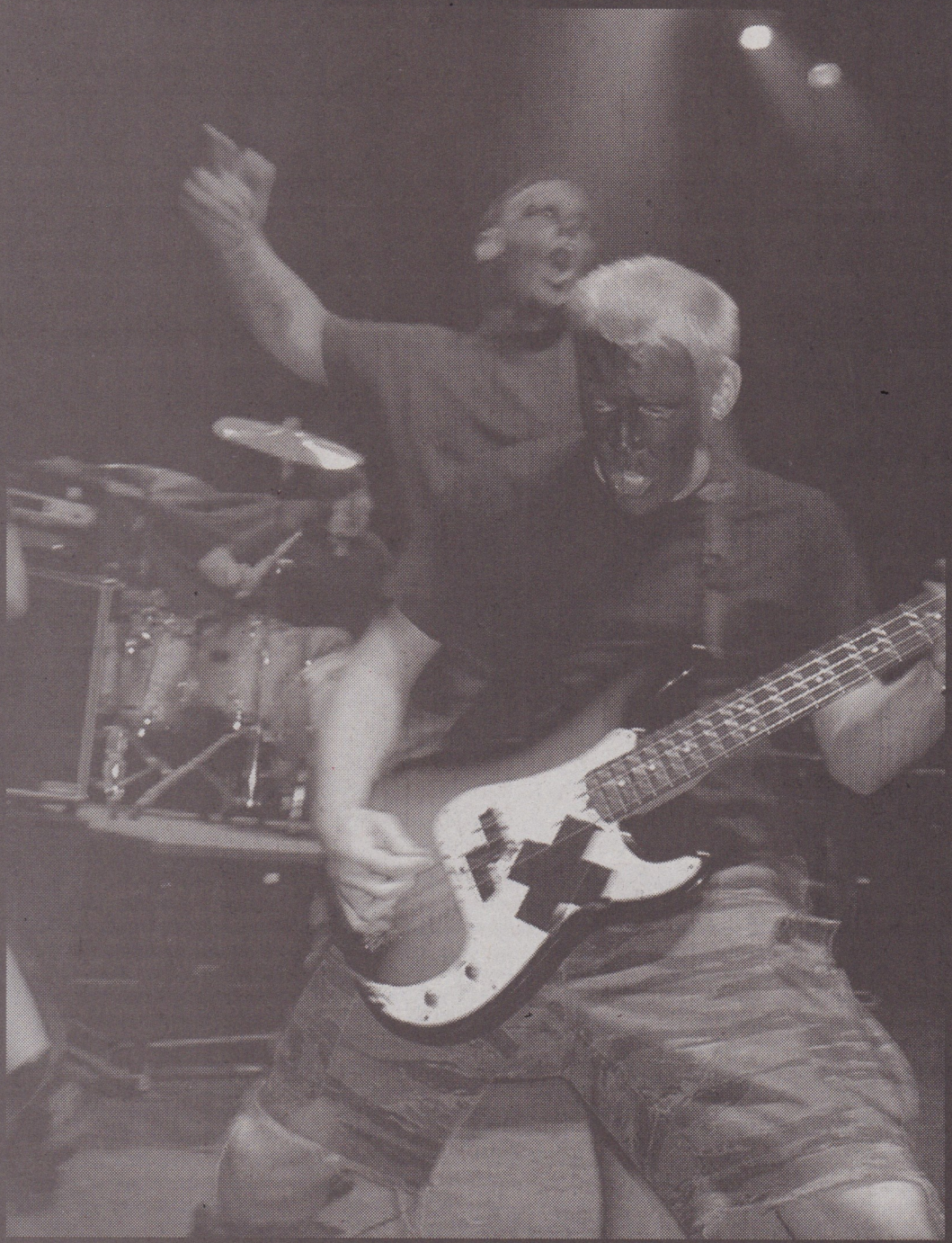
A long similar lines, many have said that ZA is merely a sped up version of SHAI HULUD, and there really isn't much of a difference between the bands. Does that have to do with Matt Fox being in ZA, or was that a conscious choice on the part of every member?
Matt: I have a writing style and it will always leak into any group I contribute music to. Regarding the statement of ZA being just a faster HULUD, obviously I can see why it has been said, nonetheless that's a very surface description of the music. I write the way I write, but there are definitive boundaries for both bands. Where SHAI HULUD/ WARMTH can always expand its parameters, ZOMBIE can blow its parameters to Kingdom Come at any given moment. For example, on the upcoming ZA/SMP split there is a song with saxophone, and a piano solo. The band is called ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE for crying out loud. We can play whatever the hell we want. ZOMBIE by it's own nature can get away with being straight and narrow or quirky and entirely off the wall. SHAI HULUD didn't, and THE WARMTH OF RED BLOOD will not have that luxury to such an immeasurable degree (WARMTH will undoubtedly never have a jazzy piano solo break out in the middle of a song). I think it will be clear to anyone that pays more than casual attention that ZOMBIE 's music is a lot deeper than simply a faster HULUD.
Ronen: I agree. Matt's style is certainly distinct, so the similarities are going to be there. And that is a good thing! But yes. We are certainly more than a faster SHAI HULUD.

Not too long ago, you put out a split with SEND MORE PARAMEDICS (which is such an awesome name by the way), another zombie obsessed hardcore/ metal/ punk band. How did you get hooked up with them, and what are your thoughts on that splits material compared to your other work?
Ronen: There's a label from the U.K. called In At The Deep End, and they had previously put out a bunch of SMP stuff as well as a number of other fine bands. One day I just got an email from Mark Swinney, who runs that label, and the rest is undead history. As far as how the songs on the split compare with older material... The stuff sounds like us, but different. It's a little more focused – but still manic.
Matt: I am having a lot of fun with our newest 5 tracks. They are all quirky and effective respectively; they vary in sound and style and have such distinct personalities. I would say that is the main difference between the newer and older material. Don't fret though, the sound and personality of ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE is definitely intact, just more defined on our split with those wacky, Englishundeadmen SEND MORE PARAMEDICS - whose tracks also rip.



When/how did you become interested in zombie films? Are you into other horror subgenres? Who are some of your favorite directors? Are you more into the Fulci or Romero style?
Matt: As I stated earlier, I wouldn't consider myself a zombie or a horror fanatic- but give me witty dialogue or a Woody Allen film any day. Don't get me wrong, I do like some horror films- just not the genre as a blanket whole. My favorite horror film would have to be Alfred Hitchcock's The Birds- by a long shot. Jaws is a close second. I was also very impressed with The Omen and The Exorcist, both very smart and intriguing horror films- not just run-of-the-mill, shock for the sake of shock horror. I can't get into that type of movie.
Regarding directors, having seen Night Of The Living Dead and parts of Zombie, I can clearly say I prefer Romero's style as he seems to rely more on character and plot development rather than flat out gore. Needless to say, I am not a big gore fan. I can watch and appreciate almost any type of movie, horror/ zombie included, as long as the substance outweighs the style.
Ronen: I take Romero over Fulci, but I'm hardly a zombie movie expert. In most cases, I don't care very much about movies. That said, Night of the Living Dead, Dead Alive, and Zombie are all unique, and I respect the different approaches. Whatever. I think what most intrigues me about it all is the symbolism you can pull from the idea of someone being "living dead." That can be an interesting concept, depending on your point of view. As far as other horror subgenres... Well I do prefer psychological horror; Psycho, The Shining. I liked Hellraiser a lot. It's creepy as hell! Saw was good. But you can't resist Evil Dead II and Army of Darkness. They're just awesome.

I received that Guns N Roses tribute not too long ago, and I can't say I was really impressed by many of the tracks, but I definitely thought your version of "Welcome To The Jungle" was pretty damn unique. Why did you pick "Jungle," what is your favorite GNR tune (if it's not "Jungle") and the funniest thing you've ever seen Axl Rose do and/or say?
Matt: Personally, I absolutely love ZA's version of "Jungle". Cracks me up every time I hear it. I have never, not even for 3 seconds, been a fan of Guns 'N' Roses. *Appetite For Destruction* came out in 1987 and *Master Of Puppets* came out in '86. Having heard *Master* first, there was no way I could accept anything lighter or music that had any semblance of glam to it. "Welcome To The Jungle" is one of the few GNR songs I have ever heard, to tell the truth, and out of the ones I did know, "Jungle" sounded the easiest to thrash up. There was no way I could cover a



GNR song without ripping it to shreds. Had we been told to pay proper homage, I'm not sure I could have contributed. I don't think all the members of ZA dislike GNR, nonetheless I went on record saying our version of "Welcome To The Jungle" was for non GNR fans, from non GNR fans. I am really happy with that cover.
Ronen: I just didn't understand why any band would want to do a straight version of a song – especially when covering material as distinct as Guns n Roses. It's like, you know those dudes are going to hear it, so why not totally mash it up, right in front of them? I wouldn't say that our version of "Welcome to the Jungle" is necessarily better or worse, but I would say that there are now two versions of that song, and that one of them belongs to us. And I like it better than the original. As far as the funniest thing I've ever seen Axl Rose do or say... That would have to be The Spaghetti Incident.

Ronen, I know you're a freelance journalist yourself. What publications (online and in print) are you currently writing for and how did you get involved in the field? What other outlets of underground music/culture are you contributing to?
Ronen: I started writing about music – mostly punk and hardcore music – over ten years ago. I published a fanzine called Aneurysm for a few years, and then I was the music editor of my college newspaper for a few years. I had a number of jobs and experiences in media and publishing. I stopped writing toward the end of college, but picked it up again about two years ago. So since then I've written for Law of Inertia, While You Were Sleeping... even AMP! I recently did an editorial for Alternative Press. And I have a website at kamikazewords.com – it's mostly short essays, opinion and commentary, and then some larger pieces as well. It's also got info on whatever I'm working on at any given moment. As far as other outlets... Well I do a radio segment called Issue Oriented. It's a monthly segment on Headwealth, which is Australia's best hardcore, metal and punk radio show. It airs on 106.7 PBS FM in Melbourne, and Ipodcast it from KamikazeWords.com too, so anyone can listen whenever they want. I'm also involved in some philanthropic projects. Secretmedia.org for more on that.

What are your touring plans here and abroad for the rest of '05 and into '06?
Matt: I think it's safe to say ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE has no true touring plans at the moment, but we will be playing in The US sporadically, and there has been talk of some dates in Europe and Japan after the split is released. Please understand this is all talk at the moment. Fletcher and I will be touring New Zealand and Australia for two weeks with SHAI HULUD this August. The band has not ultimately reformed, but we always wanted to play there and never got the chance. We simply would not pass up such a fantastic opportunity.

Parting words/shout outs?
Matt: Thanks for taking the time to extend this interview to us. We all appreciate it. Shout outs to our boys Joe "Kill it" Oz and Cutlets at Hell Bent Records, Mark at In At The Deep End Records, and of course SEND MORE PARAMEDICS. Thanks for everything.
Ronen: Many thanks to AMP, and to the kids who so passionately support this band.

JACK RABID

BANKRUPT USA

I have a cat named Mina. To my amusement, twice in her 12 years of warming the sofa she has received offers from a Visa-affiliated credit company offering her a "pre-approved" card—with my last name as hers. She is of course flattered—she usually only gets mail from her vet asking her to come in for a shot. If she could just figure out how to hold a pen in her cute little paws, she'd be able to charge all the cat toys, cat treats, cat litter, cat pan liners, cat food, and catnip she likes, despite her meager income. (I'm not sure Visa takes payment in hairballs.)

On March 10 the U.S. Senate passed legislation tightening restrictions on bankruptcy filings. Never mind that individual filings have largely resulted from sudden misfortune and from these credit card companies relaxing the standards that were previously required to qualify for a card. (25 years ago when I hit college, I recall it was much, much harder). Its passage soon followed in the House, and to no one's surprise, President Bush signaled that he would sign it. I don't even know if he has a stamp that says "veto" on it; he hasn't used one yet.

The central provision of the bill seems to be entirely reasonable. It establishes what's called a means test. It's been way too easy to just declare bankruptcy and wipe out debts for things you bought and enjoyed. Huckster lawyers even tantalize debtors with commercials hawking the ease of their services. If one looks hard enough, one will indeed find a small, offensive minority of filings that could have and should have been prevented, given the assets and continuing income of the filer, or the way they've shifted those assets to family members prior to filing. (Most bankruptcies are in fact "zero assets" filings.) This legislation, then, requires those with income at a certain level above the poverty line to file Chapter 13 instead of Chapter 7. The difference? The former requires the debtor to actually pay back his or her creditors over a set number of years, instead of just walking away scott free.

This makes perfect sense to me. Chapter 7 bankruptcies, which entitle a poor person to start fresh (with only a toilet-level credit rating as punishment), should be an absolute last resort available to only the truly ruined and destitute. Fair debts should be fairly paid back, if the person in question does indeed have the means to do so over a reasonable amount of time. As I heard one conservative thunder in a bar in March, "No one put a gun to the head of somebody and made them buy a flat screen television." Were that picture reflective of most bankruptcy filings in the last 10 years, I'd have bought him a drink in agreement. But, as with Ronald Reagan's "Welfare Queens," it's only the few that get there by gaming the system—not the many.

The problem with the legislation is that it focuses exclusively on those in debt, rather than also giving equal time to those who helped them get there. Worse, in no way does it apply similar means tests and restrictions to the corporate officers and business owners who are the real all-star, heavyweight champions of bankruptcy abuse.

There is absolutely nothing in the bill that discourages credit card companies from continuing to offer credit cards to Mina, or anyone with a social security number (or not!), regardless of financial fitness. In particular, their habit of showering college campuses with such offers—preying on young, financially inexperienced students who don't seem to grasp the burden their student loans will present to them upon graduation—is undue risk personified. When such credit card companies say they have to pass on the costs of non-payment to their honest customers, they are disingenuous. No one "put a gun to their head" and made them offer such cards with ridiculously high lines of credit to a population that used to be reasonably considered too risky. But the reason these firms do it is because anyone who is inexperienced, myopic, unfortunate, or clueless enough to carry a balance from month to month ends up paying a whopping 21% annual interest. Here's how exploitive this relationship is: Those who send only the minimum payment every time on a lousy $5,000 credit card debt at 21 percent interest will end up having to make 1,040 payments to pay back all the principal and its interest. Beyond that original $5,000 principal balance, $32,198.66 in interest will have had to be paid. Nice work if you can get it. I'd like to loan money to people at 21%!

If you collect enough dough at these kinds of interest rates, writing off bad debt just becomes a fractional cost of doing risky business (much as a shoplifter told a New York judge a few years ago when he asked her if she enjoyed having to pay so many fines over the years every time she got caught). That's why every card company around has been sending you pre-approved credit card offers over and over these last two decades. This legislation, then, helps these huge financial companies immensely, yet gives them no corresponding incentive or warning to change their deliberately irresponsible and predatory practices in lending. These companies have even been giving cards to people who recently declared bankruptcy! Nor does it spank them in any way for the draconian late fees and penalties they impose, or the astronomical interest rates they charge that used to be justifiably condemned as "usury." It's so bad that the Senate attempted to cap the maximum interest rate at 30 percent. (Some credit cards have been getting away with charging 36%. 30% the cap?!?!? And this was defeated?) You want to talk abuse? Credit card rates are abuse. (For the record, I've never paid a penny in credit card interest. I try to talk people out of it. Unless of course they enjoy paying six and a half times in interest the price of items they bought!)

Yet everything is different when it comes to corporate bankruptcy. It's been 20 years since the outrageous Savings and Loan scandals left we taxpayers the poor, hapless fools, footing the bill for the chancy and/or fraudulent loans they financed (member FDIC!). And it's been over three years since the rash of Fortune 500 busts. Yet outside of the weak-kneed slap of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, there is still no overhaul in sight for those who half-legally loot their corporations and drive them into bankruptcy, like Enron and WorldCom, and who then exploit the code's generous previsions for the wealthy to keep their riches if their companies collapse. One brave Senator, Chuck Schumer (D-NY), actually had the gumption to try to offer such an amendment to the March legislation. He was attempting to address what's called an "asset protection trust"—a very complex instrument, needless to say only used by the affluent, specifically designed to keep creditors or the government from seizing their massive shady-gotten gains. But as usual Schumer found 54 out of 55 Republicans united in voting against him—joined by 2 Democrats, since their party also feeds at the fat-cat corporate donor campaign finance trough. (According to the nonprofit Center for Responsive Politics, the banking, credit card, and retail industries gave more than $56 million to political parties and candidates in the 2004 elections, most of it going to Republicans. How badly do you think they wanted this legislation?) Without the Schumer amendment, the legislation barely even mentioned corporate bankruptcy, other than giving judges slightly more power to impose limitations on executive compensation at bankrupt firms. The final bill without Schumer's amendment then passed 74-26, with Republicans voting 55-0 for it, joined by 18 toady Democrats and one independent.

Here are some salient facts, just to put the issue in stark relief. In the last 10 years, corporate debt has increased four-fold, a whopping explosion of leverage that puts companies at greater risk of ultimate insolvency from the slightest business downturn. And while it's true that the total number of bankruptcies

JACK RABID

that have been declared by businesses the last few years has remained steady, even declining slightly as individuals filings have been on the rise, the corporate filings of the early '00s were so much larger in terms of the dollars involved than in the past that they caused way more catastrophic harm. In just two years, $600 billion—that's right $600 billion—of liabilities instantly vanished under the magic of corporate Chapter 7 protection for the belly-up mega-corporations, an astounding five percent of our nation's entire economy as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In fact, 10 out of the top 16 biggest bankruptcy filings of the last 25 years occurred in just one 16-month period, from the spring of 2001 to the summer of 2002. Since December 2001, eight of the ten largest such filings in history occurred—all accompanied by giant headlines in the business section and even the front page of your newspaper, so you probably heard about each one: Conseco, WorldCom, Adelphia, Global Crossing, Kmart, NTL, United Airlines, and of course, the most infamous of all for mismanagement and gluttony, Enron. (Though WorldCom's $107 billion in assets actually makes it the mind-boggling record holder for biggest bankruptcy ever in U.S. history.)

All of these firms were made untenable by running up dangerous, irresponsible, inexcusable levels of debt compared to their companies' actual assets that the bank loans were secured against (what's called the debt-to-asset ratio, the prime indicator of a company's long-term genuine health, as shrewd investors know) made worse by outright fraudulent accounting. Meanwhile, their executives were playing fast and loose (think of that old Depeche Mode song, "The grabbing hands grab all they can") with their own compensation, padded expense reports, outlandish perks, and stock options, as well as crony payroll stuffing, favorable special-deal loans (like disgraced, now convicted WorldCom CEO and President Bernard Ebbers, and the current lawsuit into the $408 million below-market-interest loan he attained from the company he just happened to run—nice!), and the most heinous of all, golden parachute severance bonanzas, their millions of dollars of "rewards" for running their firms ever closer to the eventual bankruptcy courts. Sarbanes-Oxley has now prohibited firms from lending to their own executives and directors. Many of these former executives, however, outside of Ebbers and a few others, have indeed managed to keep the yachts, mansions, furs, jewelry, horses, and other massive luxuries, as will others in the future if outright criminal behavior can't be detected and proved in court.

This sounds like the real bankruptcy epidemic to me, putting thousands out of work and wiping out their 401K retirement plans, and devastating thousands of others who invested in them for their pension portfolios. These companies' suppliers and service providers are also badly hurt when such companies file, as well as we taxpayers, yet it seems that very few (outside of Ebbers) ever get punished for all the treasure siphoned out of the company by its officers or ever have to give it back. Yet this brave Congress thinks the reform that screams out to be enacted is...helping giant credit card firms, banks, and car companies collect from some single mother whose divorce left her a credit card debt she can't pay off at 20-36% interest, or to make sure some college student spit out into a waning job market coughs up his every last dime for the next ten years. As we might ask Bill O'Reilly, who is sticking up for the victims of corporate bankruptcy?

OK, the legislation was aimed solely at individuals and not looted bankrupt businesses. But even then, it made absolutely no attempt to address the causes of personal bankruptcy—which is in fact not from shortsighted scammers buying flat screen TVs and laughing at their statements. The overwhelming cause of personal bankruptcy is unforeseen, sudden misfortune. One recent study suggested that around half of all bankruptcies are caused by catastrophic medical problems. Of course, no one in Congress has had any guts whatsoever in actually doing something—anything!—about the one in five of us who have no health insurance, and are thus just an accident away from the endless bill that keeps on billing. Thanks to the ostrich mentality on both sides of the contemptible aisle, this epidemic has just gotten worse since Bill Clinton's timid 1992 initiative got shot down. After eight years of appalling Clintonian neglect, Bush's see-no-business-evil tenure has just made a bad thing worse.

Furthermore, people who had or still have health insurance are now increasingly declaring bankruptcy anyway! Between co-pays, uncovered treatments, uncovered prescriptions, unavoidable outpatient care, and loss of income, people have seen their savings wiped out and creditors begin pouncing. My own recent minor surgery (broken thumb) has fortunately been covered by insurance for which I pay $350 a month. But for the last six months, I've still poured in $2400 more in co-payments. I can easily imagine a much more serious illness where those numbers increase ten times. I'm sure we all could.

The remainder of personal bankruptcies are caused by job loss and divorce. On the former, the current administration is still waiting for borrowing-'n'-spending-'n'-tax-cutting to translate into all those jobs they've been promising us for four years. Somehow, they still haven't appeared. For all the business-friendly legislation since 2001, still the job creation level fails to equal the number needed each month to accommodate new workers and immigrants, let alone the masses of unemployed. Let's see Congress address that.

And as for divorce, the Bush administration is still hoping for a "defense of marriage act"—oh, I'm sorry, I forgot. Despite that lofty title, that religious-right-approved amendment would just keep gays from marrying, as if we could wave a magic wand and make them all straight so they can enjoy nice opposite sex marriage like the rest of us, and I guess enjoy our nice 50% divorce rate, too! Not that any Congress or administration can do much about our divorce rate. But if marriages need defending, it isn't from gay people. And there's nothing in this bill that will help those whose marriages are ending from the pitfalls of overt financial stress.

So what is the real upshot of the "The Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005?" Credit card companies are naturally dancing a celebratory jig, as they'd been slobbering over this legislation for the last four Congressional sessions. But nothing else significant was ultimately done in addressing the troubling, worsening statistics we quoted in issue 54: "The first three Bush years set records for personal and business filings, 1,437,354 in 2001, 1,508,578 in 2002, and 1,661,996 in 2003"—while 2004 plateaued at 1,618,987. And to think we thought the problem had exploded in the Clinton years, from less than a million in 1993 to 2000's 1,262,102. Nope. In fact, one of 73 households declared bankruptcy in 2003 compared to one in every 144 in 1993, just short of twice as often—and this despite historically miniscule monetary interest rates.

Perhaps most relevant to the charade being perpetrated here, according to the Consumer Federation of America as many as 66% of recent years' Chapter 13 filers fail their reorganization plan, and just end up in Chapter 7 anyway! Thanks to Congress, the Chapter 7 wipe-out rate may well get much worse, not better, in the next few years, with interest rates how finally going back up, and too many people unwisely over-leveraged against their home equity (or they regrettably gambled on low floating mortgage rates, betting the good times would continue indefinitely). When you tackle a mere symptom and blithely ignore the diseases that caused it, as this bill does, then both the problems and their symptoms tend to worsen together.

Amber Pacific

By Janelle Jones

One thing Amber Pacific drummer Dango would like to see happen soon is for the Seattle-based pop-punk five-piece to be as well received live on the West Coast as they are back East. But, hey, the band's still young and in the process of making a name for themselves; all they have is time. After all, 'The Possibility and the Promise' (aptly titled, no?!) is their first full-length and they've been on the road covering the entire U.S. for nearly a year – since Warped Tour 2004 (they're playing the summer festival again this year). But there's no doubt about these guys' promise or future success (on both coasts and everywhere else). Case in point: after only being together for a short while, they were signed to Hopeless by merely sending in a demo and have been building momentum ever since.

What do you have to say about the record?
We're all really excited because we feel it's gonna be a big step from the EP that was recorded before. I'm the newest member, so I've been in the band about a year. I joined right after they signed the record deal, so I wasn't there when they recorded the old thing. And this [record showcases] a new sound a little bit, but it'll still have a lot of the sound that the fans who already know us are gonna like. I think we made a strong record and we're proud of every song on there. We're not afraid to get it out there; we want people to hear it.

So you said you weren't on the EP before, but did that have any orchestral pieces like you have on this one?
No. That was done in a couple days on a really low budget and there's just very basic instrumentation on that.

Okay, and also how long did it take to put this album together, writing the songs and everything?
I would say we started writing just a little before the record, maybe a month before and then probably five of the songs were finished when we were still actually in the studio. So a lot of it was down to the last minute, but then we were probably in the studio for six weeks recording and then two weeks mixing. It was pretty fast, putting it all together.

You've had it streaming for a few weeks now. Have you heard any feedback?
Yeah, when we first put it on PureVolume, the first two days we had like 40 thousand plays each day, so it seemed like a lot of kids out there were getting into it. And people started e-mailing us, contacting us on our Myspace page and just [saying] a lot of positive stuff about it. Then as it's getting a little closer to the release we started reading a lot more reviews online. You get your occasional negative ones just like any record, but for the most part it's been really



positive. We didn't know how people would receive it, so that was good to see.

Right. Well, like you said you're the newest member, but that's been the only change?
Since the band has had the record deal with Hopeless, that's been the only change. There were a few line-up changes before when they started in high school, but their drummer left right before they signed because he couldn't commit to doing it. So they signed with four guys and then found me, so I came in as the new drummer. As long as this band's been on tour, it's been the same line-up.

Were you in bands previously?
Yes, I lived in Nashville and went to a music school there, so I was kinda playing in the pop-rock scene and then the country scene and then the Christian music scene, so I wasn't playing in a punk band or a pop-punk band or whatever. I moved out here to do that because I'd been doing the Nashville music thing for a while and I was ready to step out and try being in a band.

I guess you bring some different elements to it.
Definitely. My influences just came from a different place than these guys, and I'm about four years older than them. I'd finished college and been through a lot more stuff and had experienced the road already. So I think it's helped us have a little more diversity in our sound as well as learning stuff on the road quicker.

That definitely comes across, though, on the record: diversity. So, when people ask you what you guys play or what you sound like, what do you usually answer?
Well, if it's somebody that doesn't know much about our scene, then I'm gonna give them the biggest radio names. I'm gonna say we're something like Simple Plan, New Found Glory, and Yellowcard. But for the kids that listen to this style of music, I usually tell people The Starting Line or Fallout Boy are big influences on our sound. Musically sometimes it's a little more like Sum 41 or something like that because we have [some] faster stuff and heavier guitar parts even though the vocals are still very poppy and melodic. It's hard because every band has trouble saying who they sound like exactly, but I'd say we sound a little bit like a lot of different bands.

Yeah, but I meant also kind of like what style... That's hard sometimes.
Yeah, I would say we're more of a pop-punk band. We got labeled more as an emo band on the first record, but I'd say at this point people would look at us more as pop-punk.

They didn't have some of the faster tempos back then?
Their old drummer couldn't play the stuff necessarily and none of the guys were really listening to that. That was probably one of the biggest changes that happened after I joined because I came from a background of listening to a lot of fast punk; I'm really into NOFX, Lagwagon, and Strung Out. So as the drummer, one thing I love about the style is being able to have the fast tempos and all the different changes. When I brought that in, it took time for the band to get used to that and being okay with it, but by the time [we finished] the record, we ended up having some really fast songs on there, which I really love. They're my favorites to play and to listen to.

Yeah, live I'm sure the kids really get going. Also, I saw the liner notes say you do all the arrangements...
Yeah, Will [Nutter, guitar/keys] is our main songwriter; he does almost everything musically, so he'll come up with a guitar part and he'll have the melody for the verse and the chorus. And my kinda thing is I really get into structuring the songs. I like coming up with the intros and how the song ends and where the bridge is gonna be, and sometimes the guitar riffs I would come up with because I'm really big on all the rhythms and stuff and just making it interesting from a musical standpoint. So that's also my contribution to this record.

What about a song like "If I Fall." How did that come about?
That was actually the last song to get done for the record. We really wanted an acoustic song or a piano song and Will was struggling coming up – he had three or four ideas that were all pretty good, but he just didn't feel they were the one. And then our last week in the studio, he came in one day and said, "I got it. I got the piano song that's gonna work," and so he played it for us, and we're like, "Yeah, that's totally different from the other songs and it'll be something refreshing for people if we put it on the CD." When we initially went to track it we all had the idea (especially Will and I) that we wanted it to be kinda over-produced and have a big orchestra and have all this stuff on it. And our producer Martin was just like, "No, let's do this one really simple with just piano and maybe a couple instruments coming in at the end." We weren't okay with it at first, but then we tracked it like that, so that's how we got the little piano ballad on there.

Sometimes if bands have a song that's very different-sounding and lighter they'll leave it as the last track. Was there a lot of though put into the track order of the record?
Yeah there really was. We had an initial track listing we proposed to the label, and they wanted to change stuff and move it around because they wanted some of the tracks that are upfront towards the front. But they'd really asked us to put the piano song last 'cause that's typical in our scene. And we just really felt good about having ["Can't Hold Back"] as number 12 because we thought it was a good closer of the whole record. We really felt lyrically it tied everything together and it had the sound we wanted at the end. We didn't want it to end on a mellow note; we wanted to go out strong. We compromised with the label about switches and moved some stuff around, but basically we're all happy with how it ended up.

About touring, I saw in your news section on your Website that you've had some troubles with your RV.
Yeah, this last trip was killer for us. We were gone about three months and towards the end after everything had been going all right we had our brakes go out, which is typical, it was at 50 thousand miles, so it was time for a change so we did that. But then the next week the transmission went out and that was like 3500 bucks, and then we were getting ready to drive home and I mean, that would've been enough and that should've been fine and we got our RV looked at and just had a tune-up right before we came home. We're pretty sure when the tune-up happened something went wrong, and when we left that night for home the engine just broke down and started grinding, so we had to get it fixed and we had to leave the RV in Southern California and fly home. It was there about a month and it cost us eight grand to fix the engine, so that was a killer end to a tour. We'd just been getting ready to go home



and we probably would've broken even if that hadn't happened. That's the first time we ever lost money on tour because of that.

You guys have jobs and stuff?
When we're home, two of us do and three of the guys don't. It just depends on the circumstances. It's hard to work just like for any band because we're not home for long. But for me, I try to get jobs playing drums in other stuff when I'm home because that's what I've gone to school for and that's what I'm trained to do, so I feel I can jump into a lot of styles and try to get studio work and try to get some live gigs while I'm home.

Yeah, I was just wondering 'cause like you said to get away and do the touring you have to have a pretty flexible job. But I saw you're gonna be on the 'Punk Goes '80s' comp.
Yeah, we did a song for that and it'll be the last track on that CD, which hopefully will be good exposure for us just 'cause those sell pretty well, and there's a lot of bands on there that are much bigger than us. Hopefully that'll do all right.

What song did you pick?
We did "Video Killed the Radio Star". We thought it would be a good one people know. We were pretty pleased with the arrangement and then we did the recording of it, and we didn't get to work with the same producer that did our record. We were real pleased with how our record sounded, so this doesn't sound as good in our opinion. It's just not gonna be as high quality a recording which is a little frustrating, but I know a lot of kids out there don't care. It's just I'm pretty anal about that stuff, so I'm not super-thrilled about it 'cause I think it'll sound lower budget than some of the big bands on there.

So you picked that song, though, 'cause a lot of people will know it? No other reason?
Yeah, well, it was all new wave that's supposed to be on that CD, so we were just trying to think of new wave songs the kids knew – kids younger than us. There wasn't that many we could pick from. If we were doing anything in the '80s, I would've been more likely to pick a hair-band song or a Bon Jovi song or something.

Right, that wasn't a...
That wasn't an option. [Laughter]

Since you moved to Seattle, how do you like it there?
It's been a big transition. It's been a big change – the temperature's a lot different. I lived in the South, the pace of life's a lot faster here, the cost of living's a lot higher, and the weather's more gloomy all the time. But overall I'm really getting adjusted and made a lot of really good friends here now, so I'm enjoying it. And the band's really clicking now. We've done this for a year – which isn't a long time – but we've lived together long enough on the road and just got to know each other well enough that we feel like we know what we're doing now to the point where we can work hard and give it our best and not just feel like we don't have a clue anymore.

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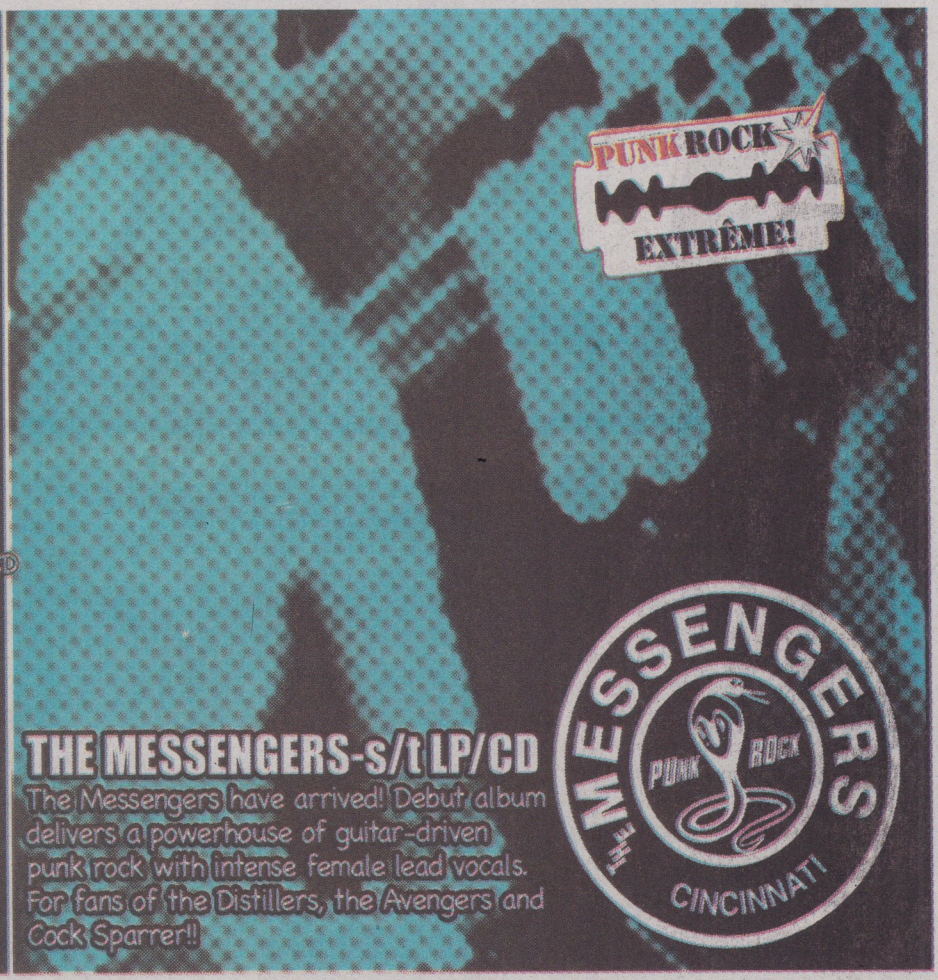
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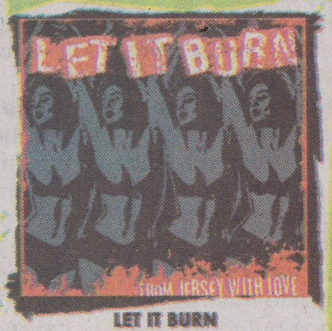
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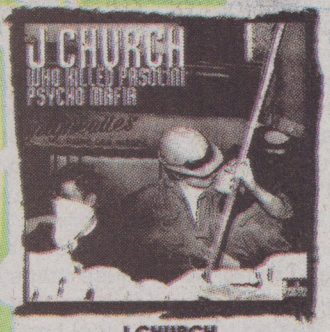
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LOUD FAST RULES!

Well, from the publishers of your favorite magazine, AMP, comes a magazine dedicated more to people that run in circle pits than that kung-fu dance at shows. This is the premier issue of Loud Fast Rules! Magazine (LFR!), and it comes out of the gates with a bang. The content is stacked from columnists such as Duane Peters (US BOMBS, HUNNS, etc...), Tripp Underwood (THE UNSEEN), Jake Casualty (THE CASUALTIES [duh...]), Blag (DWARVES), and many more, to great an in depth articles on many bands such as THE BUZZCOCKS, THE ADVERTS, KILL YOUR IDOLS, THE UNSEEN, BROKEN BONES, THE BLACK HALOS, THE DUCKY BOYS, THE DROPKICK MURPHYS, THE VIBRATORS, BLOOD OR WHISKEY, and a butt load more. There are also great feature articles such as an in-depth look at the 11 best albums released in 1977, and spotlights on headache and A-F Records, as well as pages of flyers from shows of yesteryear that you know you wished you were at. Almost 180 pages in all. And because LFR! needs to keep up with its sister publication, you know it's going to be packed with free stuff inside too! Every issue comes with a free 29 track CD featuring new and unreleased tracks from BRAIN FAILURE, THE CASUALTIES, THE WHISKEY REBELS, KILL YOUR IDOLS, THE BRIGGS, NY REL-X, THE ADOLESCENTS, 7 SECONDS, and much more. And almost every issue comes with (in fact, you'd have to be pretty damn unlucky to not get one!) a free BYO Records label sampler CD with THROWRAG, THE BRIEFS, CLIT 45, and more. Also, randomly inserted throughout the press run are stickers for THE UNSEEN, DROPKICK MURPHYS, ROGER MIRRET, and others. Enj-OI!



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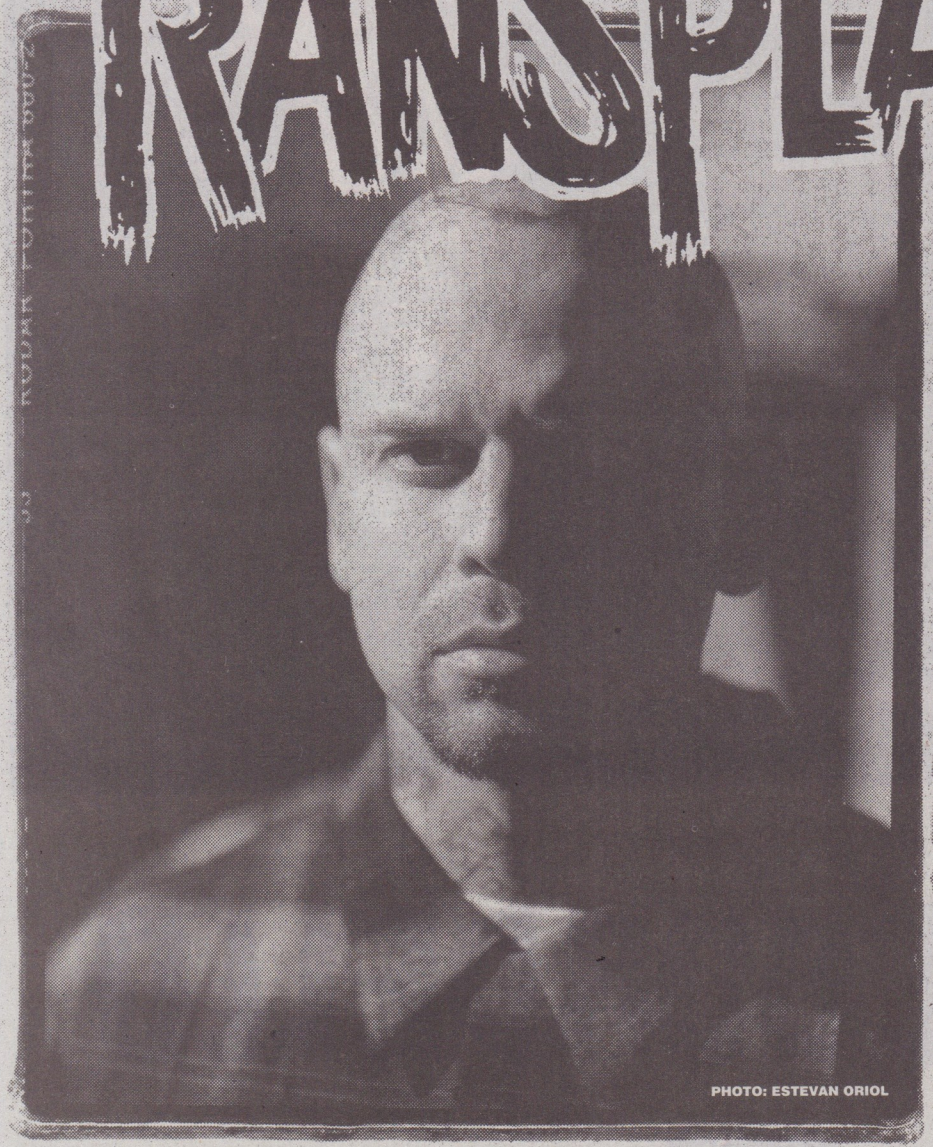


PHOTO: ESTEVAN ORIOL



THE TRANSPLANTS ARE BACK!

By Don Sill

The "gangsters and thugs" known as The Transplants are back with their much anticipated follow up to 2002's self-titled debut. The boys have a few tricks up their sleeves with this release and are out to prove that the sophomore jinx does not apply to them.

The trio which began in 1999 as an experiment between three homies (Tim Armstrong [Rancid], Travis Barker [Blink 182] and Rob "SR" Ashton) has evolved into a punk rock supergroup which has grown well beyond any of their expectations.

HAUNTED CITIES, on Atlantic Records is described by Rob Aston as "way better than the last one." Aside from the three punk veterans this album will also feature an array of cameos and guest appearances by such artists as Boo-Yaa Tribe, B-Real, Sen Dog of Cypress Hill, and Rakaa of Dilated Peoples. "All them dudes are my homeboys outside of this music shit," said Aston, "I couldn't be happier with what they did."

AMP got hold of Aston, on the verge of their sophomore release and got the scoop on the HAUNTED CITIES as well as their upcoming Warped Tour slot.

Great to see that the three of

"WE'RE GONNA DO WHAT WE WANNA DO."





you got back together once again to record HAUNTED CITIES. Was it easier or harder this time around?
A little bit of both. It's hard to get all three of on the same schedule in the studio, but once we get in there it's easy.

With the first album, it must have been more of a "fuck em if they don't get it" vibe. But then everyone loves the stuff- is their more pressure with this album?
Not at all. We still think like that. At the end of the day, no matter what anyone says, we're gonna do what we wanna do.

Did you guys change up the sound at all?
Yes and no. We touch on damn near every style of music with this one, but it's still our sound, it's still Transplants.

How does HAUNTED CITIES compare to the last record?
Haunted Cities is way better than the last one. I hate that record.

Sounds cool- So what can kids expect from HAUNTED CITIES?
Everything and then some, and nothing at the same time. A lot of people ain't gonna be ready.

What dynamic does bringing guests such acts as- Boo-Yaa Tribe, Rakaa from Dilated Peoples, B-Real and Sen Dog add to your music?
All of them mother fuckers are the shit. When we were writing those songs, I knew exactly who I wanted on each track. All them dudes are my homeboys outside of this music shit. Just so happens they all happen to be extremely talented. I couldn't be happier with what they did.

Any favorite tracks off this new album? Why/, or why not.
The ones I like are- "Killafornia," "Not Today," "Crash and Burn," "Hit The Fence," "What I Can't Describe," and "Apocalypse Now."

What is the secret to a tight Transplant tune?
If I told you, I'd have to kill you.

What gets laid down first, the lyrics or the melody?



PHOTO: "ANARCHY" ALICIA HARDY



PHOTO: "ANARCHY" ALICIA HARDY



PHOTO: "ANARCHY" ALICIA HARDY

With me, I usually write my shit when I hear the beat for the first time. I free-styled a bunch of shit on this album, too.

I can only imagine a ton of smoke in the recording studio-
(It) usually consists of me and Travis smoking the whole time. Literally. (laughs)

Do you write all the lyrics?
I write all of my lyrics and some of the choruses.

What inspires you?
I'm not inspired by much. I just write about what I know, what goes on around me.

What mood do you write best in?
Usually a bad mood and stoned. But that's how I always am, I guess.

When does inspiration hit you?
Inspiration hits when I get to work with other artists I look up to. That makes me step my game up.

How does The Transplants new material translate live?
It's a whole different animal live.

You guys must be getting psyched for Warped Tour this summer?
Yeah, we're

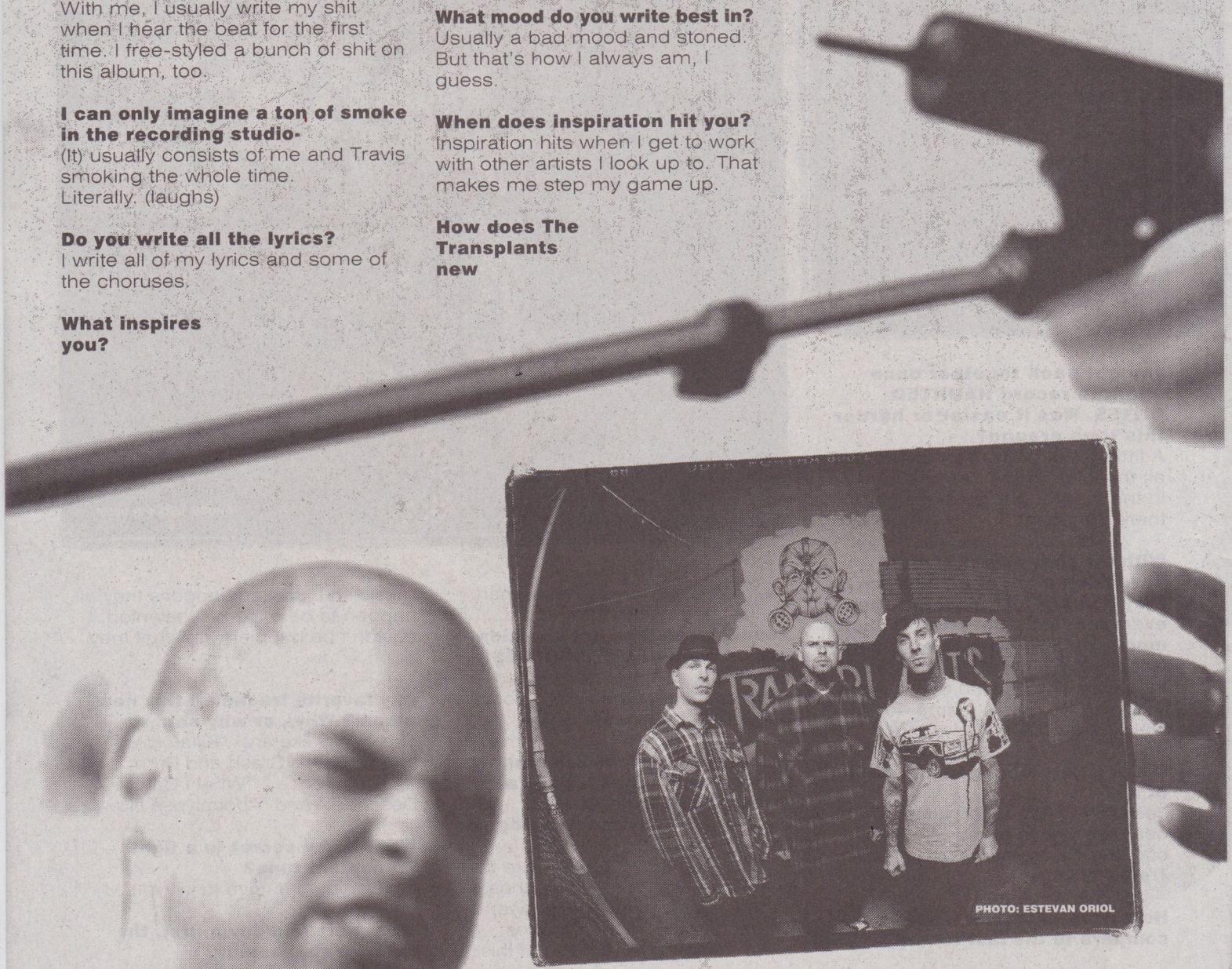


PHOTO: ESTEVAN ORIOL

all looking forward to it. Especially me, since I've had to work on that tour before. It'll be nice to actually play.

What do you do to prepare for such a massive tour?
Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. (laughs)

Will you bring any of the guests, such as B-Real and Sen Dog, on the road with you?
I wish I could bring everyone. Un-fortunately, we can't. I'm sure they'll all come out to the LA shows. I can't complain, I'm just happy I got to work with them at all.

How have audiences been reacting to you guys?
Positive so far.

How crazy do you get in your live show?
Like I said,

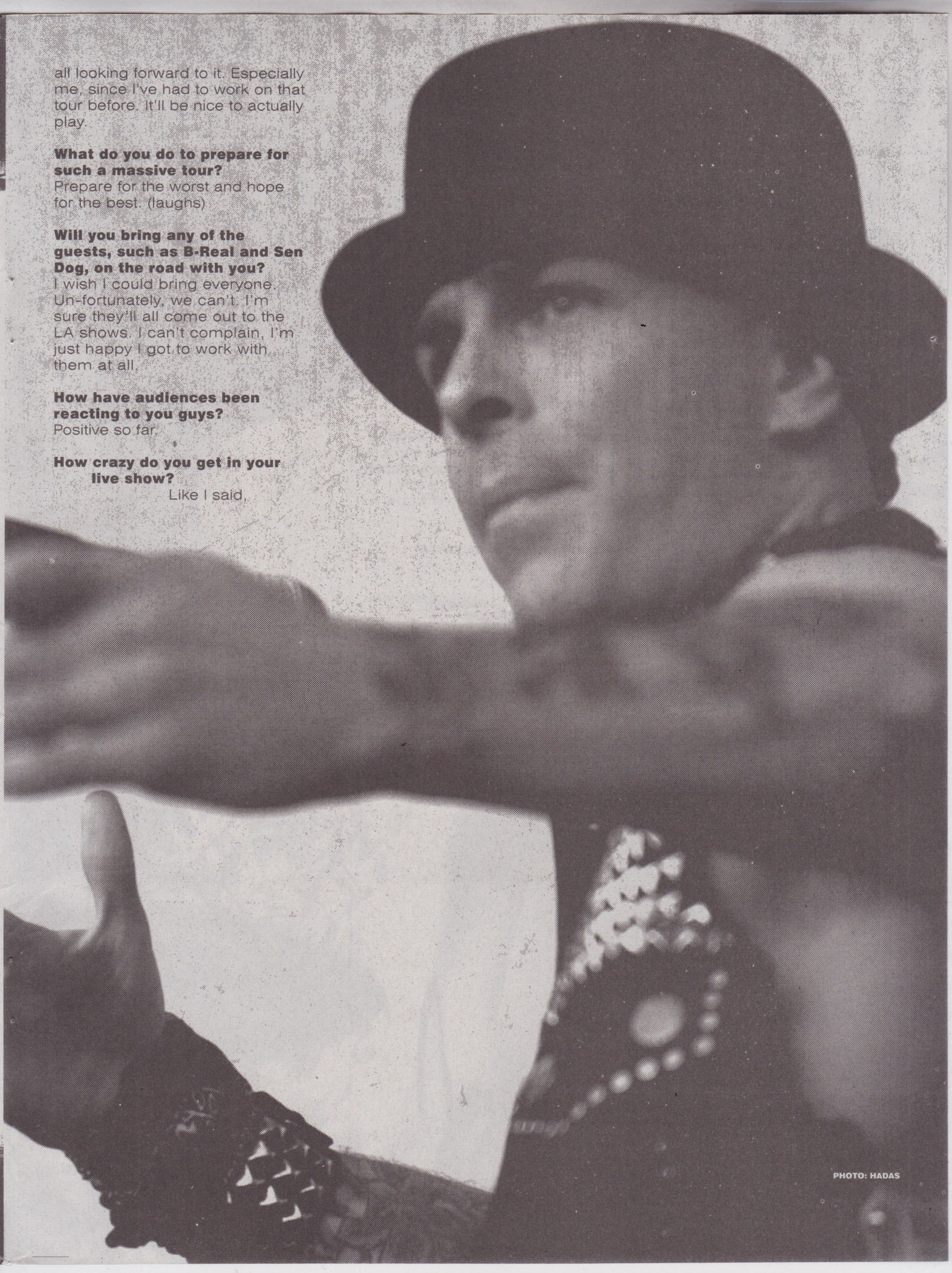
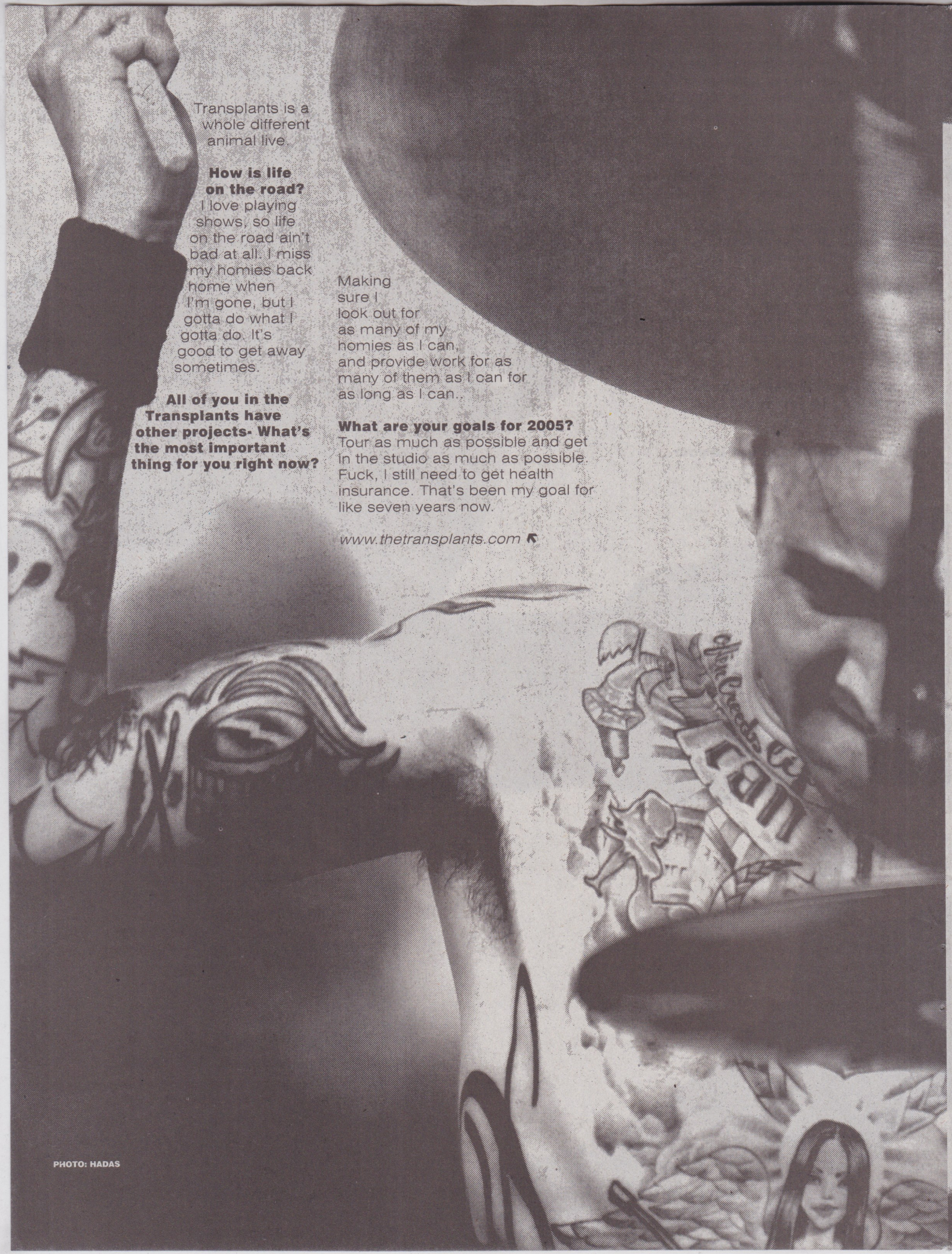


PHOTO: HADAS



Transplants is a whole different animal live.

How is life on the road?
I love playing shows, so life on the road ain't bad at all. I miss my homies back home when I'm gone, but I gotta do what I gotta do. It's good to get away sometimes.

All of you in the Transplants have other projects- What's the most important thing for you right now?
Making sure I look out for as many of my homies as I can, and provide work for as many of them as I can for as long as I can..

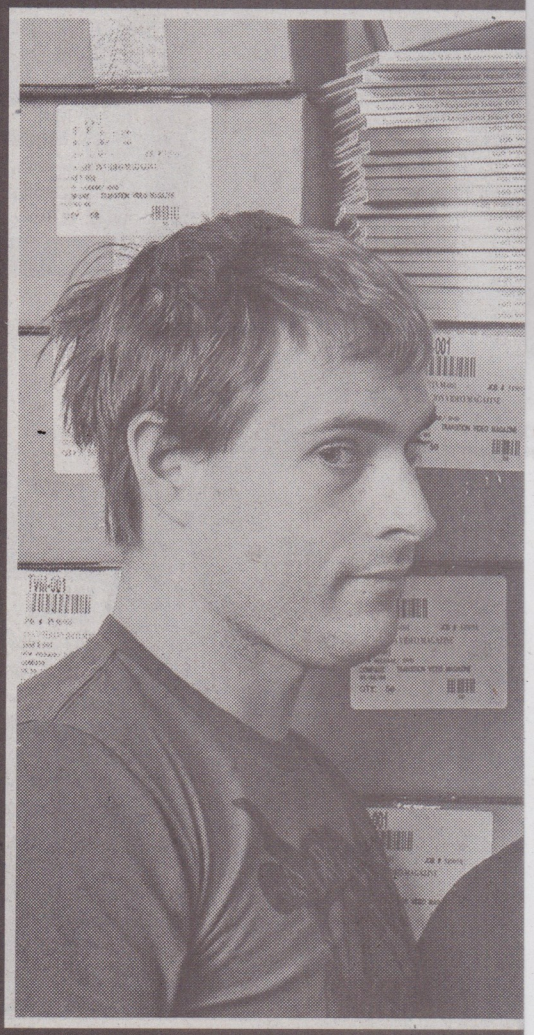
What are your goals for 2005?
Tour as much as possible and get in the studio as much as possible. Fuck, I still need to get health insurance. That's been my goal for like seven years now.

www.thetransplants.com ↖

PHOTO: HADAS

TRANSITION VIDEO MAGAZINE

While the rest of us sit around moaning and complaining about the lack of good music represented in the media, three dudes from Gainesville Florida got off their asses and took different approach. They started Transition Video magazine.



A DVD magazine, Transition is based primarily on music, art, and skateboard culture. The brainchild of Bryan Wynacht, Mike Lipscomb; and Jake Burghart, the man who brought you "We're Never Coming Home" the Against Me! tour documentary. TransitionVM is a series of articles on "whatever we were interested in" offering music fans a way of hanging out with their favorite artists without having to leave the couch, gain carpal tunnel syndrome or even worse, read about them, something Transition's creators claim is "so out."

Eager to see what the magazine was all about AMP Magazine caught up with the creators at Fluid Skatehop in Gainesville, Florida to listen to them fart, fuss and decide what Transition Video Magazine's really all about.

What exactly is Transition Video Magazine?

Bryan: The idea is to have a periodical set up to be a bunch of articles in a magazine, but done in a mini-documentary format. The articles are based on whatever we have an interest in, we just film it, try to put together a story and use it as one of our segments...

Mike: Basically it'd be a lot cooler to be watching Bryan say this right now than it is to be reading it...

Bryan: True, true.

Mike: That way you could look at him and judge him...

Poke fun at him and laugh with your friends.

Mike: Yeah, yeah, look to see if Jake's shoelaces match his shirt and stuff like that... (Earlier Jake bought new shoes, and then changed his shirt to match his new green laces)

Brian: It's true though, its like reading is 'kinda cool,' but not really, I think reading's kinda boring...

Jake: Reading is so out.

I'm going to quote you on that.

Bryan: I tried to read when I was younger and I realized TV was way cooler. So that's how the idea came about, we were like, "seeing shit's way cooler than reading about it."

Jake: Also the video isn't just an interview, it contains an interview, but it also includes other stuff. The things you have in an interview we want to include visually. So you have the interview and then you have the content.

Bryan: It adds another element to the idea of what an interview is, you get to see it actually moving. It's like Harry Potter, when you see the pictures in the wall and they're actually moving, it's like that...

Mike: That's not true, it's like being able to cruise around, push around on your skateboard with somebody. Like instead of doing the interview its like lets just go cruise...

So it's more like hanging out with the artists.

Jake: It's about cruising.

Okay, so basically how long have you guys known each other and how did you all meet?

Jake: I met Mike when he tried to come and see my band play, he was a big fan (Mike laughs) and uh, he sent me fan mail and we got to be friends.

What band was that?

Jake: Para La Guerra.

Mike: That's true, that's true. Me and the bass player were wearing the same shirt.

Jake: What shirt were you wearing?

Mike: A Swarm shirt, and I go "Hey, nice shirt" and he goes "cool," then Jake came in it and I gave him my phone number. Plus he used to buy me booze and stuff.

Jake: Yeah 'cause he wasn't twenty-one yet. And then Bryan's just one of those guys you meet after being here for a while. (Bryan laughs).

Mike: It's funny 'cause I hadn't met him until I came back from Canada.

Bryan: Yeah, I thought you were like hardcore gangster, you were unapproachable. He had like diamond earrings and shit like that it... was really intimidating. (Mike laughs).

Mike: Yeah, I was Canadian at that point.

Jake: I didn't really get down with Bryan until I started doing stuff with Against Me! and we got together to set up some lights to shoot photos. Eventually, I went on tour with them for a month and made a documentary.

The Against Me! tour documentary?

Jake: Yeah.

Bryan: I actually knew your girlfriend first...

Mike: OOOOOHH!!!

Bryan: And she was like, 'you should totally ask Jake about lighting, Jake can tell any F-Stop in lighting just by looking at it.' So I thought you were just some kind of lighting genius, I was like 'I gotta call that guy' cause I was shooting all these pictures, but I didn't know anything about studio lighting...

Mike: And then you guys didn't know dick?

Bryan: No, we figured it out, the first photo shoot we had actually went pretty well.

Jake: We took some pretty good shots.

What were the photos for?

Bryan: It was supposed to be the front cover of AP magazine for their punk voter issue. So we go out and get all this lighting shit and we're ready to go, but the magazine sucks and they decided that we weren't 'cool' enough to take the picture or whatever, so they blew us off in the end. You can put that in there.

Mike: Yeah you can print that shit (laughs).

Jake: Punk rock shooting ourselves in the foot from the start.

So this was a good basis for a business relationship?

Jake: Uhh next question?

(All laugh)

It seems that every band nowadays has a website with videos interviews and exclusives on there as its become increasingly easier to do...

Bryan: Are we worried about that?

Yeah where do you see your place in that? Do you feel that Transition's necessary when people can access it for free?

Bryan: I think people want quality stuff, you know? The Internet's cool but you're not getting good quality...

Jake: Mostly you're gonna get some guy running around with a video camera. A lot



of the stuff they come back with is just one angle of a show with video camera audio, the stuff we're putting out's a lot more quality.
Mike: Plus we have backgrounds in this.
Bryan: If you're doing something for free on the internet, and I used to do a website, you kind of just throw everything together. Also, if you don't have to have great knowledge of graphic design, photography, film or anything like that, well you don't have to be good at that to put it on the net. But to go out there and put out a product that someone's going to want to buy and be confident about it? You can't pass off a bad DVD. If someone buys a DVD and it's of poor quality, they're not going to buy it again and the shit's going to fail, but if you put out something that's good, even a website that's good, if you put your time into it then when you see it you'll tell your friends about it. Basically, we're putting stuff out that you won't find anywhere else at a high standard of quality. If someone did put the same amount of time and effort into making something that good of quality of a product that's going on the internet that would be, uhh...

Undercutting you...

Bryan: Whatever, it would be competitive to what we're doing, I guess in some way, but still, I don't think it would even matter in the end. I don't think DVDs or movies have as much fear from the Internet as music does, it's a lot easier to download that kind of product.
Jake: Plus we have the DVD available on our site for $7.00. That's nothing for a DVD.

So what are you backgrounds, pertinent to? What you're trying to achieve? Mike, I understand you recently graduated from film school in Vancouver?

Mike: Yeah, I mainly film skateboarding now, among other things, but what I really like to do...(Bryan makes farting noises, Mike starts laughing)...no I went to film school and I graduated and I'm an all around pretty tight dude...I hang out with people pretty well...
Bryan: That's what you want to do with your career? Hang out with people?
Mike: You know you're a shit bag...
Bryan: (Laughing) You're the one farting and shit when I'm trying to talk.
Jake: I also went to film school. I've been out of film school for about five years now, I spent a few years hanging out, a few years chilling hard and then I've been in and out of real jobs. I used to produce local commercials for places like 'Big Tom's Furniture Warehouse' and 'Dave's Auto Alignment' (all laugh).
Bryan: Dave's Auto Alignment? Is that even a real place? (Laughs)
Jake: 'RV Megastore,' I'm protecting real names.
Mike: You had that beautiful shot on the beach where you're driving in the car with the camera out the window...
Jake: Oh, yeah! We did this RV commercial where I was hanging out the back of this truck with someone holding onto me, riding behind this RV on the beach which had these sweet rims and I had my fisheye and I was putting it all up in the rims...
Bryan: That was awesome...
Mike: It was gold.

You go to great lengths for what you want to achieve.

Jake: Yeah, and then from there I got tired of having a real job and traveled around with a blimp crew for a little while.
Bryan: Talk about the blimp crew, that's awesome.
Bryan: Yeah... you got to fly in a fucking blimp or something.
Jake: There was a remote control camera on the blimp that I operated with a joystick. I never actually went in the blimp
Mike: Didn't you have to film a golf ball?
Jake: Yeah I was the aerial shot for golf.
Mike: PGA motherfucking tour.
Bryan: That's awesome.
Mike: PG motherfucking A.
Bryan: you saw Tiger right?
Jake: yeah
Mike: Pissed on the plane!
Bryan: Tiger got drunk and pissed on the plane?
Mike: (laughs) No...
Jake: From there I came back to Gainesville and started talking to Against Me about doing a music video which evolved into the DVD I did for them.

So, Bryan, what was your background?

Brian: Basically, I loitered around Gainesville for about ten years, I went to school for psychology but my passion's always been photography. I got involved with bands by tour managing but originally because of my interest in photography. I started shooting pictures of bands and then I wound up meeting a lot of people, and taking a lot of pictures of different bands, which then led me to Jake through Against Me! (Jake laughs). They led me to the cheese...
Mike: Jake cheese...
Mike: He shot the cover of the new NoFX greatest hits album.

Congratulations.

Brian: It's not the greatest picture, but they liked it so it worked.

So where do you see Transition headed and what would you like to do with it?

Mike: Straight to the top! Out there man, just cruisin' (all laugh)
Jake: Headed to California....
Bryan: I think the idea is just to go with it and see what happens. We have no idea, like we're obviously just starting off, but we really want to keep putting out issues like every couple of months or something...
Jake: We want to get big enough to where we don't have to kiss anyone's ass, if we can get to the level where we can operate the way we want to operate and not kiss anyone's ass, then that would be cool.

So how can readers get hold of a copy of Transition?

Bryan: No Idea Records is handling our distribution so you can buy it directly from them, or you can buy it directly from us through www.transitionvm.com. It's also going to be available at most good record stores. It's better to buy it direct from us though as you'll definitely get a better deal.

BRAZIL

By Angele Lalonde

So who is here right now?
J: My name is Jonathon and I sing...
P: My name is Phillip and I play bass...
E: Eric and I play guitar...
N: I'm Nick and I play the keyboard...

Beyond playing, what other jobs do you hold within the band?
J: I'm a part-time driver and also I share responsibilities for taking care of the numbers and the money.
P: I do a lot of hooking-up of places for us to stay for the evening.
N: The 'Placetostaygetter.'
P: Yeah, the 'Placetostaygetter'... and some random publicity.
E: I don't really do much other than play the guitar and some manual loading of the equipment.
N: I share the other half of the number crunching responsibilities with my brother.
J: We're the only people in the band who know how to add and subtract. (laughing)
N: And read. (laughing)

Did putting your tour van for sale on your website actually work?
J: Um? Yes and no... We got some emails about it but ultimately it ended-up being bought by a friend of ours.
P: Our old merch guy...
J: He was in a band and they needed a van. He got it for a steal.
N: Yeah, he stole it...
J: But yeah, I couldn't sell it for six-months; we had it on the market. I kept dropping the price and dropping the price and then all of a sudden, everyone started getting their tax-checks and I was getting ten calls a week, but I had sold it.

If given the choice... if you had a tour bus- what one luxury would you pick?
J: My wife and son.
P: I just want to say surround-sound theater.
E: Maybe a ski-slope, and rock-climbing wall.
N: A bowling-alley... a toilet!
E: They usually have that.
J: You can't pee in the toilets on tour buses though?
E: You can pee but you can't poop...
P: But now that they got the 'Turd Cutter 2000.' It's being installed in all the buses
J: The thing is our band drinks so much beer we probably wouldn't want to pee in there because we'd end up... Once they've found a way to burn pee as fuel we'd



probably end up stinking for awhile. (laughing)
E: We're working on that one...

What'd your promo-kit sent to Fearless look likE: pull-off anything creative?
J: Well, being a bunch of broke college students it was the best we could do at the time. It was a demo; a burnt CD with a package we had made at Kinko's Copy, a poster I had printed by some guy that printed posters and some sort of letter that said 'hey we're real serious about this, we're looking for someone to put out our stuff...' It was really basic, but we tried to cover all the bases. Just plain brown envelopes, mailed them out. Strictly utilitarian, you know it wasn't flashy like 'hey we're the next big band!' No, it was just like 'we are a band that works hard and we need somebody to put out or music'. I mailed-out one hundred and I got one call. No, that's a lie we got one call and two rejection letters from others. So that means we got ninety-seven 'who gives a crap's'.
P: Under the rug... Filed under trash.

What for you, does a label do for a band? So many bands now, think expectations are getting higher?
E: I mean it depends on the label, I guess but I mean they help out bands a lot by distributing your material; they give you money to record and put the record out. They back you, they do some publicity. I don't know, I guess basically they are your backing for being a band and getting out there. It's pretty impossible to do it yourself.

Don't think it can be done independently?
E: Oh yeah, it's been done, but it just depends on how much you're willing to put behind it. Look at Ian Mackaye, Minor Threat and Fugazi and when they started 'Dischord'. They've done it all themselves and they handled it all themselves and you have to respect them for that. It would be nice if everycne could do that. But it takes so much work. Minor Threat was pretty much unknown for a long time and then as soon as they started getting popular then Dischord kind of grew out of that.

P: I just think bands have weird expectations of labels. Like if they get on a certain label, like a label you've looked up to your whole life, that they just expect something is going to happen, or this label couldn't possibly screw me because there's all these really good bands that I like on it and they seemed to have done okay... I mean no matter what, no matter who is putting-out your music, if you don't bust your ass doing everything, expecting to do it all yourself, then nobody is ever going to put any interest in saying 'oh well I am going to spend money on you'. That's how I feel about it. I really don't think it matters what label you're on and I don't think you get anything specific because you're on any certain label that's popular or that you really would like to be on because you've always listened to bands on that label. It just doesn't happen like that.

You're six guys in the band-what happened to the conventional four-piece idea with Brazil?
E: We were going for something a little bit bigger. We wanted a little more instrumentation than just a regular four-piece band. And yes, where it's not financially beneficial to us being a six-piece band because that's two more people to split the money up between, its way better live and we're able to replicate the sounds that we do on our record pretty much to the 'T'.
J: I think in the long-term it will pay-off. I mean look at 'Kansas' they had like what five guys (laughing)
E: Look at Slipknot...

Fans of The Police? You just did one of their covers for a new compilation?
E: We did 'Wrapped Around Your Finger' by The Police off their album 'Synchronicity'
N: Sting? You might have heard of him?
E: The compilation came out in June.
P: It's a Fearless Comp 'Punk Goes 80's.'
J: All kinds of bands doing 80's songs kind of in a punk way. Actually, Underoath did the same song that we covered, but they went a different direction with it. So it'll be interesting, ours is pretty tripped-out you know... kind of mushroomy.

First French sentence off your newest CD kind of sets the entire stage, story of the record- was that your goal?
J: Kind of yeah... Well I like all my lyrics to be very... very umm, very French, yeah I guess so (laughing). No, to invoke a certain vibe I like to be very bookish, very literary. But that particular line there is not there strictly for pretentiousness. It's actually a line I picked for a movie called 'Fire Walk with Me'... The line is 'J'ai un ame solitaire' which means 'I have a lonely soul'. You can watch the movie and see where it fits in, but I guess a lot of people were like what is he trying to do there? And you know... I am just pulling lines from things that I like. Not to downplay the lyric or anything but that's pretty much what it's there for. It was funny- when we played Montreal Warped Tour in Canada, all these French-Canadian kids kept coming up to me asking me 'what are you saying in that song?' Basically I pronounced it wrong on the album and well... they made sure to tell me that. But I've sung it that way for so long it's just not going to change... Go U.S.A! (Laughing) no, no I'm just kidding about that last part...

Your song 'The Novemberist' you quote of airplanes, November and how 'November is what can change me'. Where were you going with that song, kind of confused?
J: Well, first of all I am not trying to confuse people, 'cause you know, I think there's a lot of bands out there that try and put words together and hide behind that like... sort of putting hair on the chin (Phil pulls a hair off of Jon's face...laughing). You know instead of being more upfront... Basically in the song 'Novemberist' when I wrote that song the thought that I had in my head was sort of- the time when old things die to make way for new things that are about to be born; spring. So it's almost kind of like the Taoism cycle, like the cycle of death and rebirth, it's kind of a song like that. A celebration of

death almost, but not for death's sake, but for the rebirth of other stuff, things to be born again, but not in the Christian way (laughing) you know, just in the universal sense.

In your lyrics you even mention anti-depressants like Lorazepam and even Garmonbozia... where were you going with those?
J: Okay well the song 'Escape'... Okay well the first part 'give me all my garmonbozia' that's from a 'Twin Peaks' quote you just have to pick-up the movie and really watch it to catch this context. The Lorazepam, it's actually a medication that they used on catatonic people and if you listen to the song 'Escape' and listen to the lyrics... You know on the surface this is how I really like to try and do all of my lyrics, with a lot of different layers. On the surface it kind of sounds like 'okay this guy is. daydreaming'. It's the kind of song about being lost in a nice, mystical, happy world. But actually it's got a darker subtext where a person is actually catatonic They can't function, their eyes can't see, they can't move and they have this whole entire world inside their head. And Lorazepam being the medication that I chose because it fit somehow kind of goes along with that. It can set you free but it doesn't.

Is your song 'Zentropa' in reference to the movie?
J: Yeah the Alfred Hitchcock throwback. Well actually, the song has nothing to do with that movie. I just like the term Zentropa, I think it's cool.

If you could submit one thing to the Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame in Brazil's name what would it be?
(Nick points to his beer)
E: Well I would submit the robot. The giant robot that we're going to have on tour in three years from now... The firE:breathing truckasaurus.
P:We're going to be the first band to play on the moon.
E: Yeah we're trying to be the first band to play in outer-space.
N: Weren't The Cardigans the first band on the moon?
P: It's just a title not a fact, not reality dude.
N: Damn, after all these years...
J: I think I'd put my gray jacket that I wear all of the time 'cause its about ready to fall apart, it's already a relic, or my boots maybe...
(Everyone looks down at Jon's worn brown cowboy boots.)
J: I found these in a club in Washington. They were buried in dust and old records. They happened to fit so I've worn them for every show ever since. And the thing about boots you don't break boots in, boots break your feet in.

Live can you expect to see all the instruments played on the record?
E: Yes... Everything except for the saxophone and cello.

Isn't it Nick and Jon's dad that plays the saxophone?
N: Yeah actually it is...

Ever think to bring your dad on tour?
N: Yeah we have, he meets us at shows sometimes, like when we're close. He wanted to go to New York with us a few weeks ago when we were there, but it didn't work out with his work schedule.

Take your pick- Waffle House or Sushi?
(everyone screams out Waffle House)
N: Who's paying?

Your brother...
N: Oh well then, sushi!
J: Well then, he doesn't get to eat tonight. No- but my wallet says the Waffle House but my stomach and my brain says sushi. Waffle House is so affordable, but if you eat it three days in a row your stomach starts to feel like you have a ball bearing inside of it. But then sushi is so expensive, but it's so good.
E: Sushi is gross.
J: But it's fish... fresh (looks at bit confused)
E: Any place you can get hash-browns with cheese, chili, onions and...
P:Jalapeno peppers!
E: Aw yeah, it's great..
N: and raw fish...
P: We need to get a triple order of hash-browns and that's it...
J: Sliced, diced and infected... whatever.

If attending; Warped Tour or Woodstock?
(everyone answers Woodstock)
J: But do you mean modern Woodstock or old Woodstock?

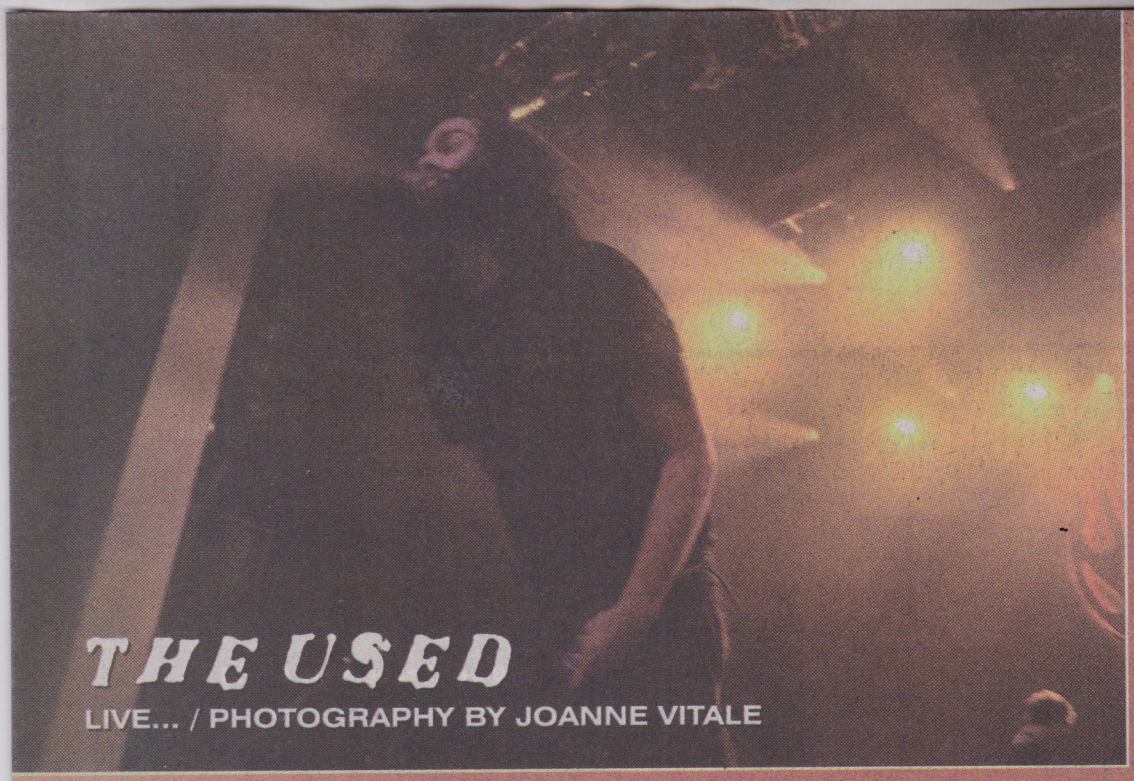
Old one would be a given, but if it was the new one?
E: No then...
J: I don't wanna be raped...
E: Yeah I don't wanna be set on fire...
J: Have poop thrown on me...
E: Or watch Limp Bizkit...

1984 or Brave New World
J: 1984.
P: Dude they just read Brave New World and I am going to read it next. You should have said Animal Farm or 1984 but I am going to say Brave New World.
N: Brave New World.
J: You know 1984 is very close to the concept of the movie 'Brazil'..
P: Where our bands name comes from...

Mars Volta or Ted Leo & The Pharmacist
E: Mars Volta for me...
N: Mars Volta.
P: Damn that's a tough one...
E: It should have been Mars Volta or Sparta...

That would have been the given though.
P: How about Ted Leo or Slayer, not Mars Volta.
J: The thing is here we as a band mostly tend to favor more complex music over a kind of more simpler music so that's kind of why most of us are kind of defaulting towards Mars Volta, but that doesn't mean that we listen to them all the time or take our queues from them... Pretty much if there's any question as to what we take from them. I would only say that we must have a few of the same records in our collection and that's where it ends.

Anything else guys?
P: I would say Ted Leo
J: And I am spent...



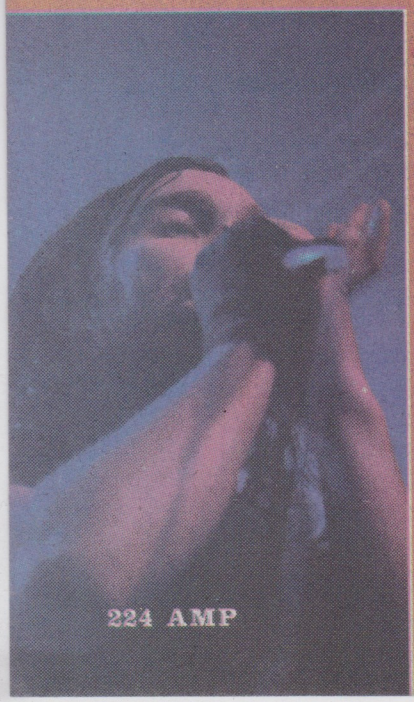
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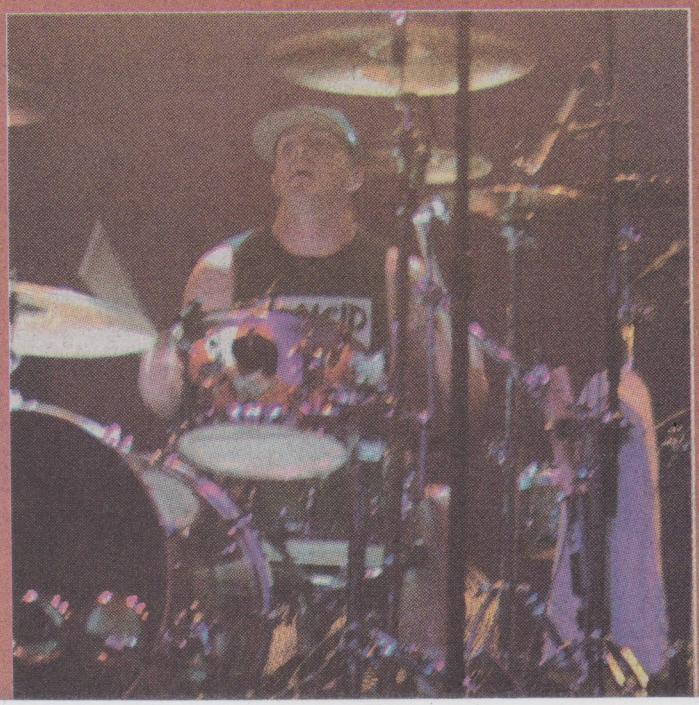
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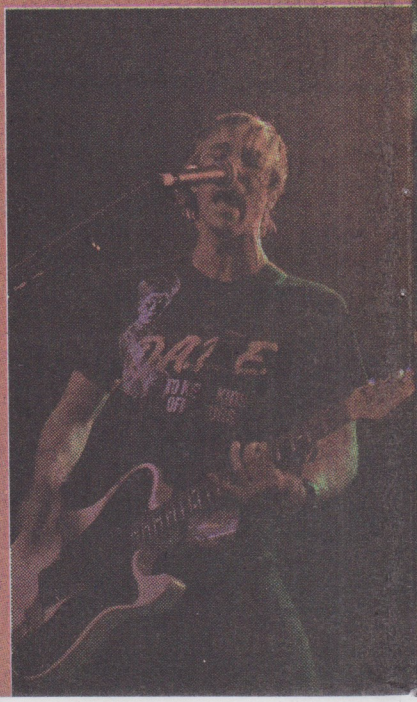












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A STATIC LULLABY

Static Prevails

By Tristan Staddon / Photography By Alex Wenten

Chino Hills' A Static Lullaby aren't about to fade into the night anytime soon, you might just have to wait longer between chances to see them now that they're taking on the world. The grimy world of corporate rock, that is. And while their detractors don't hesitate to tell anyone who'll listen about why this band is only the lesser of two evils, it's about time they realize their words are falling on deaf ears. Odds are, the same ones that rocked to ASL – vocalist Joe Brown, guitarist Nate Lindeman, guitarist/vocalist Dan Arnold, bassist/vocalist Phil Pirrone and kitman Brett Dinovo – in some sweaty club the night before. Say what you will about them, they've never backed down from a challenge and the state of your radio is a worthy one. So though Pirrone may not yet be legal drinking age, he's seen the bottom of a bottle and a heart or two. Deep in the midst of his band's slot on this year's inaugural Taste Of Chaos tour, see what he had to tell Tristan Staddon about his band's new record (Faso Latido), their new label (Columbia) and his new outlook on life.



I've had the chance to see you guys play a few of these new songs. How do you think they're responding to the new songs live?

They're being received well. We can only play a couple of them a night, but they're taking them well so far. Music's just not like it used to be anymore, you know? With computers now, you can make everybody's drums chopped up and then nobody can pull it off live. Sammy (Siegler, session drummer for Faso Latido) did his part in one edit. Normally there are 3000 edits done on the drums of a whole album and Sammy's had one. Drummers just don't do that anymore. Neither do singers – they just aren't good like they used to be. So they can in their sidekicks, the Pro-tools. We wanted to be able to hit some of that high-register shit last time, but we were young and didn't get it. This time, we still wanted to, but we made sure we could do it ourselves.

Once again, you guys are touring your tails off and have been pretty much since your inception. What's changed for you guys as a live band?

Before we didn't know that being on tour with someone, you see the worst version of the person that there is. The road sucks and you're not at your best. Honestly, even now, there's more shit than there is fun. I mean, it's sweet and the good outweighs the bad now that we've learned to adapt and know how to talk to each other.

Joe has told me that his acid reflux becomes a big problem when he doesn't take care of his voice. One of the things I noticed right away with this record is the tremendous vocal improvement that you've made. Tell me about how you take care of your voice now that you play a bigger part vocally.

Well, over the summer, Dan and I – and Joe, too – all ended up getting vocal lessons. Not a lot, just a little to work on a few things. Like, for me, I love singing. It makes me happy whereas before I was unsure of myself. Bjork's my favorite artist, so you know I love to sing. To be able to jam and go up there onstage and sit there jamming in your head and sing is really great. There's no other reason I took the vocal lessons other than that. On tour, I've been drinking lots of tea and I've cut back on cigarettes by about 85%. Three months ago I was smoking cigarettes all day long.

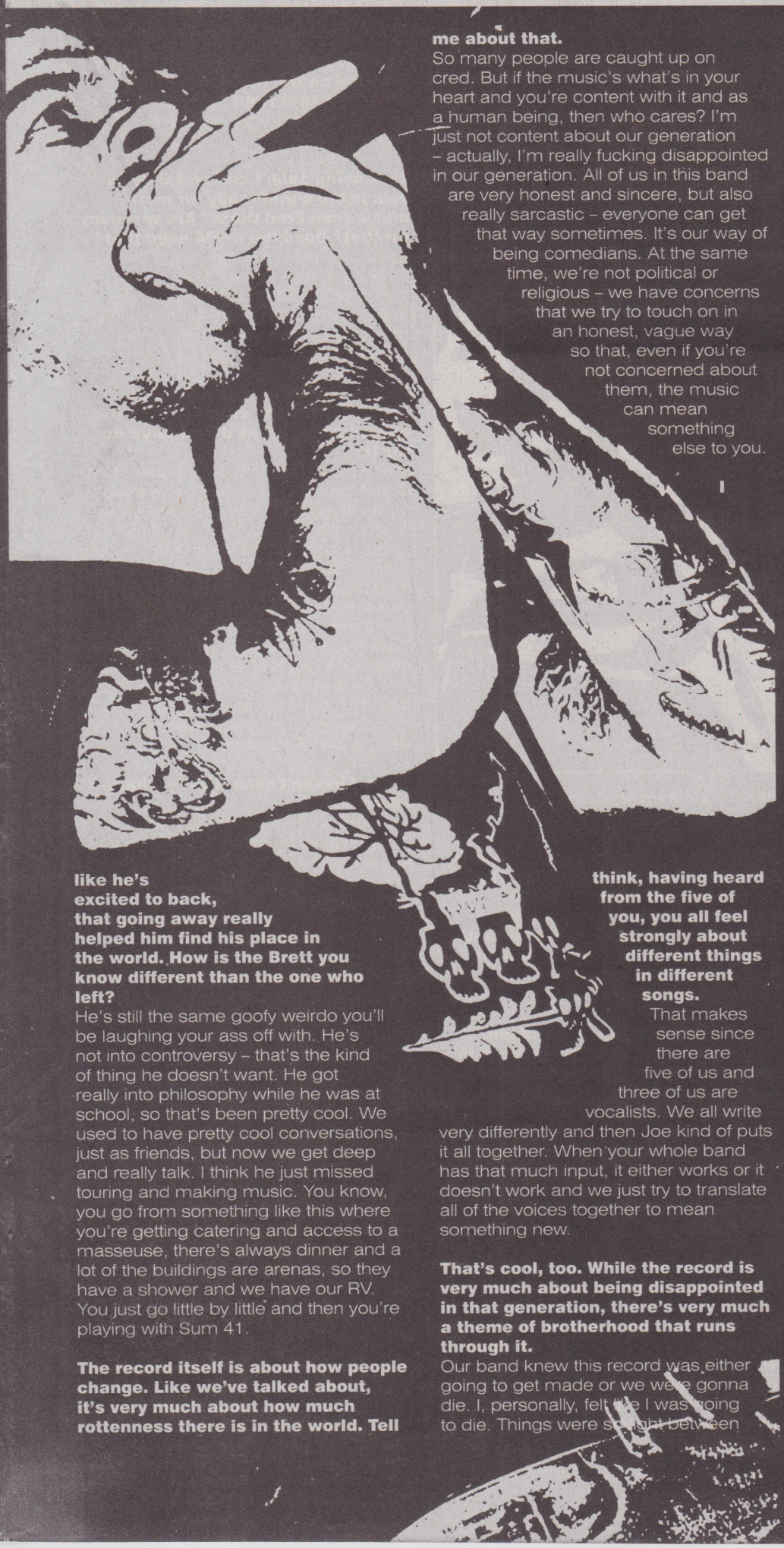
Good to hear you're using your head - because that'll only help the body, too.

Man, it used to be that I'd have breakfast – well, I'd have my first meal of the day, usually lunch – and smoke. Then I'd go play and smoke. I can't do that anymore and I don't kid myself about that. I eat well and I'll still have alcohol, but I just can't smoke like that anymore. I've still got young lungs and I want to be able to sing to my wife and kids one day.

That's really a testament to the kind of person and the kind of musician you've become. Now touring all the time can be rough on your voice, but it's also what led to Brett leaving this band for a while. It can get pretty overwhelming for a young band to be on the road so much. How are you better prepared for tour this time?

That's just it – we prepare a lot better. Before we'd be too drunk and too stoned, we didn't stretch, we'd go for a run. Now I've actually got my singing lesson on my iPod as vocal warm-ups. I lay off the bottle and no one will get belligerently drunk, whereas in the past we'd be awfully wasted. We're in good enough shape if we just look after ourselves. We've definitely gotten more professional, but we're not there yet.

When I've talked to Brett, it seems



like he's excited to back, that going away really helped him find his place in the world. How is the Brett you know different than the one who left?

He's still the same goofy weirdo you'll be laughing your ass off with. He's not into controversy – that's the kind of thing he doesn't want. He got really into philosophy while he was at school, so that's been pretty cool. We used to have pretty cool conversations, just as friends, but now we get deep and really talk. I think he just missed touring and making music. You know, you go from something like this where you're getting catering and access to a masseuse, there's always dinner and a lot of the buildings are arenas, so they have a shower and we have our RV. You just go little by little and then you're playing with Sum 41.

The record itself is about how people change. Like we've talked about, it's very much about how much rottenness there is in the world. Tell me about that.

So many people are caught up on cred. But if the music's what's in your heart and you're content with it and as a human being, then who cares? I'm just not content about our generation – actually, I'm really fucking disappointed in our generation. All of us in this band are very honest and sincere, but also really sarcastic – everyone can get that way sometimes. It's our way of being comedians. At the same time, we're not political or religious – we have concerns that we try to touch on in an honest, vague way so that, even if you're not concerned about them, the music can mean something else to you.

I think, having heard from the five of you, you all feel strongly about different things in different songs.

That makes sense since there are five of us and three of us are vocalists. We all write very differently and then Joe kind of puts it all together. When your whole band has that much input, it either works or it doesn't work and we just try to translate all of the voices together to mean something new.

That's cool, too. While the record is very much about being disappointed in that generation, there's very much a theme of brotherhood that runs through it.

Our band knew this record was either going to get made or we were gonna die. I, personally, felt like I was going to die. Things were so tight between us all it was ridiculous. There were certain things each of us wanted that we weren't getting. Mine was probably our communication – to have great, open communication – but there was no communication between us. We had just been touring so long and then we stopped. We spent some time apart and got ourselves together and came back. When we sat down at first, it was a mess. But we demoed and we worked and stuck it out together We didn't get tours on the first record – now, things are getting hot. We're getting tours and working on making it through the industry; stuff like that, for example, will help make you closer.

You had a short amount of time to write this record and you've talked about how, at first, things weren't really coming together on this record. Was being rushed like that scary or sort of exhilarating?

Actually, looking back, we had a lot of time to write this record. I never looked at it like that, anyway. We had like two months to work on it before pre-production, but we were still working on stuff during that. We had from September to November blocked out for pre-production time, but when we started writing in June, I was looking at it like we had from June to November. So, it might've seemed like a short time, but I always knew we'd get it done.

You've talked before about what a great guy Tim Devine is and how things at the label are great. In fact, I remember you telling me that it felt like Columbia was secretly laughing at all the other labels. Tell me a little bit about how the relationship is working out.

The guy from Sony who discovered us for the label is this guy Josh Rosenthal from their marketing department. He came and saw us in Kansas at this quiet show that nobody was at. He's just a regular guy. I knew right away that he wasn't sleazy – you can just tell. I mean, with these types of people in the music industry you have to be careful, but the more you get used to them, the easier you can see the bad ones. And his last name is Rosenthal. But he's cool – he never gave us any reason not to trust him. And Matt Neufeld, man, he's always turned up to 11. He is great, great, great, great, great. I'm not going to name any names, but when he came to see us in the studio to see how things were going he had just come from this other band's post-production. A band that had gone gold and he shut them right down. With us, right away he was digging them all – all of the songs. He said right there that three of them could be singles; everything just worked out right. Do you know how good that was to hear him say that? He works with



songwriters and everyone all over the label. That was really cool.

Something about the first record I know you weren't totally satisfied with was the artwork. Don Clark gave you something like 10 sketches and none of them were quite right. Tell me about the art of the new record.
Yeah, the art for the first record was all done on the computer, so it looked like a medical journal or something was scanned onto the computer. This time we were looking for something more organic. We called John Murphy, this guy who has worked with Weezer, Green Day, A Perfect Circle, Tenacious D – all of those great bands – and we went up into the mountains in California. We found this really old, perfect-looking tree and just put tons of Christmas lights all over it. That evolved into lights coming down the hill and it all just looked really cool. There were 1000 feet of lights, 60 feet of cable and two crews working it – one of the mountain and one down on walkie-talkies. We only had ten minutes of good exposure time, so we had to do everything really strategically. Then once it was done they used Photoshop to take out the little trees around it so it looked like it was just one tree out by itself in the middle of nowhere.

When I looked at it I thought 'Big Fish.' But the story's almost as good as one of the stories from Big Fish. Now, I talked to Nate about the fact that you guys are going to be recording a cover of "The Everlasting Gaze" for the Smashing Pumpkins tribute that's coming up.
Yeah, man.

Tell me how you got involved and about the honor of being involved in a Pumpkins' tribute album.
I heard about it on the Internet from our manager. We wanted to record it and found out about the budget to make it and that was it. We almost ended up working with Billy Corgan actually. He contacted us when we were working on the record, but it just never developed. We had chosen out producer and I guess he contacted us about producing. It's crazy thinking that he was almost our producer.

You were talking about really clicking with Lou, who you worked with after working with Steve Evetts on the first record. Now, I believe actually that the conflict that Steve had that prevented you from working with him this time was that he and Ross Robinson were in Prague working on the new Limp Bizkit record. Is that right?
(laughs). I can neither confirm nor deny that.

That being said, I can certainly ask you: is the world ready for more music from Fred Durst? Are we ready for that? Does the world need that?
Absolutely not. What I will say is that maybe the world doesn't not need to hear Wes Borland. I think he's got real talent. But I don't think Fred Durst belongs anywhere but a hole in the ground.

By the time this goes to print your "Stand Up" video will be out everywhere. What'd you guys do for it?
Well, we worked with Zach Burke, from Converge, just because we wanted our name attached to that. He's really just a cool hardcore kid, but older. Anyway, "Stand Up" is not the most "roar!" video – especially for Joe – so it could've been hard to get into it, just like any time you're doing a video it's just not natural to act that way, so it can be hard. But Zach had this cool energy and was really down for it and had all these cool tattoos. And he wasn't into it just because it was for Columbia. He was like, "Well, they'll probably pay me good," but that wasn't why he wanted to do it.

Since I haven't seen it yet – what's it all about?
It's the story of a dollar in Hollywood. It starts out with Joe giving it to this homeless guy and some kid comes up and steals it while he's asleep. Then he goes to a convenience store where the cashier pockets it instead of putting it in the cash register. That guy, the cashier, gives it to a drug dealer who gives it to a prostitute and then it gets handed to a police man and later he gives it to his kid. It looks like it should have some disease on it by now and then eventually the kid loses it to some businessman – your typical A&R guy. It's pretty cool.

Considering what the song's about, that sounds like it suits it perfectly.
Yeah! L.A. is just not a good place. If you want to find all of that shit, go to Vegas.

You guys also have Brett's birthday coming up pretty soon. Are you doing anything for him?
You know, I don't know. [Away from the phone, yelling] Hey, Brett! Are we doing anything for your birthday? Aw, I don't know. That's right when we have a little time off between the tour and the record. We'll probably do something, just relax and have some drinks or something like that.

Reviewers: (MC) Mitchy-Poo Cardwell, (RK) Ramsey Kanaan, (STM) Samm@ The Mick, (JC) Jimi Cheetah, (DM) The Reverend Dominic Moresi, (LD) Laura Davis, (RVH) Ray Van Horn III, (TS) Tristan Staddon, (MWB) Matt "Windbreaker" Cote, (MR) Mike Rodriguez, (CDM) Charles David McCormick, (CC) Caleb Cattivera, (NN) Nick Norton

ACCEPTANCE
"Phantoms" CD
The latest Seattle-based band set to steal the attention of our nation's sophomores and freshmen delivers its long-awaited debut. An insanely accessible and sometimes poignant blend of bright pop-rock balanced with the odd unabashed ballad, the disc establishes Acceptance's [very] familiar sound and allows them room to expand on it later on. Much of the disc is strong, some of it really good. And if "Different" isn't played at half of this country's high school proms this year, well, there just ain't no explaining the taste of high school DJs. But the biggest notable is the work of producer Aaron Sprinkle. Here, like on the new ANBERLIN album, Sprinkle - a singer-songwriter in his own right - introduces himself as the brightest untapped hitmaker on the west coast. It's not hard to find the JIMMY EAT WORLD influence, the disc's second song, "Over You" is as good as any song on that band's last release. But the way Sprinkle makes these feel-good sounds fun for everyone, without ever coming across like lame ducks, deserves your attention. (TS)
(Columbia / www.columbiarecords.com)

A DAY TO REMEMBER
"And Their Name Was Treason" CD
These guys play two completely different styles, and manage to combine them into one. Best described as screamo (ughhh that term makes me shudder), think COALESCE meets FALL OUT BOY, as messed up as that sounds. When they do the pop stuff, they're real good – good music, solid vocals – nothing ground breaking, but they're doing it well. When they do the thunder-gut sounds of the metal genre, they're lacking something. Overall, it's at least something a little different from the rest of the mass of screamo bands, but at the end of the day, it's still screamo. (MWB)
(www.indianolarecords.com)

AGAINST ME
"Search For A Former Clarity" CD
It's finally here...AGAINST ME!'s long-awaited, much-anticipated follow up to their Fat debut. It's been almost 2 years since they dropped the modern masterpiece 'Eternal Cowboy' in our laps, and the big question is - can the follow-up possibly compare? The simple answer is yes. Not only does this CD compare to its predecessor, but to tell you the truth, it blows it away. 14 tracks clocking in at over 40 minutes, these aren't the short, fast, insanely catchy songs that AGAINST ME! has become known for. These are the long, fast, insanely catchy that AGAINST ME! has moved on to. I'd say the only way to sum up this CD is to say that if you took all of the best parts of 'Axl Rose' and took all of the best parts of 'Cowboy', and then combined those and pushed the style and sound to a level never before reached, you'd have this CD. This release leaves no doubt as to who is the reigning king of the punk rock scene - it's AGAINST ME! This band continues to do things never dreamed of, and continues to create a sound never before heard. If for whatever reason you've never gotten into this band, seriously, do it now - you'll be on board for something that is truly amazing. If they continue to improve with each release like they have been, I can't even imagine where this band is heading. And for all the kids out there who will piss on an amazing CD before even buying it, if it's on a major, you can still dig this band - they passed on all that major-label cash and stayed on their independent label. And for all those kids who say they're sellouts and they're changing their sound - you couldn't be further from the truth. This is AGAINST ME!, through and through. In this day and age of corporate punk rock and bands whoring their sound for the majors - if you can't respect that, I don't know what you're doing reading this magazine. (MWB)
(www.fatwreck.com)

AGENTS OF MAN
"Count Your Blessings" CD
Members of some legendary hardcore bands (Bulldoze, One4One, Cold As Life) come together to create an truly unique but undeniably brutal album that combines mid 90s moshcore, elements of death metal, some classic rock, and a whole lot of progressive thought to create an inspiring sound all their own. Get into it. (STM)
(www.centurymedia.com)

ALCATRAZ
demo 2005 CD
I was fortunate enough to see this band open for TERROR and COMEBACK KID recently. The bassist broke a string. Do you realize how hard that is. And hard is all this band is. Hard as a fucking hammer to the base of your skull. Straight from the streets of the Sucka Free, this bunch of hooligans kick down old school beatdown hardcore ala MADBALL and TERROR with the metallic tinges of HOODS and HATEBREED and some classic Yay Area thrashy bits to get your circle on to. Man, this is the complete package for any hardcore fan and this is only a demo. These boys are hyphee as fuck and you can expect great things from this Frisco band. (STM)
(they don't have a website, so hit them up at alcatrazhardcore@yahoo.com and tell them to send you a demo)

ALMIGHTY LUMBERJACKS OF DEATH
"Always Out Of Control, but Never Out Of Beer" CD
16 tracks - everything this Detroit band recorded during their tenure in the late 80s / early 90s. Musically, they drew heavily from the likes of the OPPRESSED and early BLITZ, and sound all the better for it. Lyrically, unfortunately, they were (are) retarded morons. They love the flag (so fucking join up and fight like a real man, you hypocritical fuck) and pussy. Not so good for your country, or women, I suspect. (RK)
(Disconnected Records / www.disconnectedrecords.com)

THE ALTER BOYS
"The Exotic Sounds Of..." CD
This band features members of the MUSHROOMHEADS and DOG FASHION DISCO. Overall this comes across as a mishmash of metal, funk and experimental goofiness. If you're into bands like MR. BUNGLE, you might dig this, but I couldn't get into it. (JC)
(Fractured Transmitter / P.O. Box 33518 / Cleveland, OH 44133)

AMBER PACIFIC
"The Possibility and the Promise" CD
Another cookie-cutter band, crafting their sound around the hooks and yelps that have made so many so famous, wearing cool clothes having sloppy hair. Maybe these guys play this music because they like it; maybe they play this music because it's cool. Either way, they're forever entangled as one of the mass of bands that all sound the same. Music purgatory. That's rough. (MWB)
(www.hopelessrecords.com)

AMORA SAVANT
"The Immaculate Misconception" CD
New school metalcore ala POISON THE WELL combined with a little Sunset Strip riffage. Decent, but nothing amazing. While they have the chops (both in techage and brutality), they seem to lack some substance, as is symptomatic with the majority of metalcore this day. All head and no heart. Hopefully, as this is a debut effort, they will age well and be a true force to reckon with in the near future. (STM)
(www.volatileproductions.com)

ANEURETICAL
"When You Were a Kid" CD
The under 21 band doesn't get much respect normally in the music critic world. We tend to approach these bands with a doubtful attitude. In this case, this young Minnesota band passes all the tests. It's a great emo / post-punk record by three kids who know exactly what they want to sound like. Not a bedroom project; this is the real deal. (LD)
(www.afternoonrecords.com)

ANTAGONY
self-titled CD
Awesome grind core from the Bay Area that combines touches of big bombastic metal, old school hardcore, and East Bay drunk punk buried de ep within its blazing grimy grind noise attack. Recommended for fans of SPAZZ, BENUMB, EL DOPA, ASSUCK, and what-have-ya. Great stuff from a great band. (STM)
(www.antagony.com)

AS I LAY DYING
"Shadows Are Security" CD
Thanks for the shitty burned CD-R and Xeroxed track listing. The album is great and won't disappoint AILD loyal fans and will certainly gain them some new ones. Equal parts metal and hardcore brought together by a unit that knows what they are doing. (STM)
(www.metalblade.com)

AS I LAY DYING
"Shadows are Security" CD
As I Lay Dying are generally known as the hardcore band that metal heads like or the metal band that hardcore kids are into. They walk the line between the two genres with grace and the new album does not fail to please either side. Anyone who is familiar with their older stuff should know what to expect. It's unfortunate that a band with this much talent doesn't experiment with different styles a bit more, but this "Shadows are Security" does have a few parts that are sung, not screamed, and features cameos by Matt Mentley (Throwdown), Dan Weyandt (Zao / my favorite scream in the business), and a few others. It's worth picking up. (NN)
(www.metalblade.com)

AT THE DRIVE-IN
"This Stations is Non-Operational" CD
It's easy to forget how amazing AT THE DRIVE-IN was. So many bands of today incorporate the sound that they created into their own, it sometimes now seems watered down and overdone rather than cutting edge and inventive, like it once was. One listen to this anthology of b-sides and rare tracks, some previously unreleased, and you'll remember what it was that made these guys so special. Also included is a DVD, so all the kids who are too young to have seen these guys (how sad does that sound? Damn youngins) can now enjoy the absolute energy that was AT THE DRIVE-IN. Darting, chaotic sounds coupled with amazing gusto and craftily shaped into songs is what they created; thanks to Fearless Records, we can all relive that and pine for the



good ol' days. (MWB)
(www.fearlessrecords.com)

A WILHELM SCREAM
"Ruiner" CD
These guys put out one of the best albums of 2004, with their Nitro debut, Mute Print. Ruiner picks up right where Mute Print left off, ripping through 14 tracks, each one you will swear is better than the last. Seriously, these guys can do no wrong. After toiling in the local Massachusetts punk rock scene for years, they were given their chance and they've taken full advantage. The sound these guys get from their guitars is unparalleled in the scene today. You'll even get a listen to their softer side with this release, with one song being a bit of a mellow jam – but don't worry, they get right back to the furious rock on the next tune. These guys are one of the top-five bands out there today – guaranteed. (MWB)
(www.nitrorecords.com)

AWKWARD ROMANCE
"To Breath Is To Compromise" CD
Tortured, ugly emo-Christians let it all out. Sometimes it's better to keep it all in. Or at least, keep it between you and the God dude. Vengeance is mine said the Lord, and apparently its come in the form of dross like this. Why bother compromising. Just stop breathing...(RK)
(Day Job Records)

BEATNIK
"Viva Apocalypse" CD
This band has a MESSAGE! They hate George Bush with a passion. So they've got that going for them. Like an angry SIMON & GARFUNKEL, they construct folky protest songs for the 21st century. While the music is not really that good, I applaud their lyrics and their efforts to affect some change. (LD)
(www.ecovoxrecords.com)

BEFORE BRAILLE
"Balance & Timing" CD
I can't help but slam this album for several reasons. First of all, the opening track is a kind of ode to cheating. Hmm, I'm not really gonna support that. The rest of the songs are that sensitive guy rock that tries so hard to be effective in making you feel something. It's just sloppy and cheap. (LD)
(www.sunsetalliance.net)

BAFABEGIYA / ARABELLA
split 7" EP
Screamy angst ridden hardcore is played by both and both also suffer from a murky production. Both bands show some potential and talent, but this release isn't really doing it for me. (JC)
(Spacement / 5120 Idlebury Way / Reno, NV 89523)

BENT LEFT
"Skeletons In Your Closet" CD
3rd self-released CD of angry, political punk. Very much in the vein of ANTI-FLAG. They do it well, with plenty of gusto, venom, sass and energy. Well worth checking out. For sure. (RK)
(www.bentleft.com)

BENUMB / PREMONITIONS OF WAR
split CD
How do I give a bad review to an album that thanks not only me, but my mother in the liner notes? Well, I don't have to because this is one amazing fucking album. Two bands that are masters of their chosen genres come together to deliver upon the world one of the most brutal releases of the year. Let me start with BENUMB, because they are so dear to my heart. I love this fucking band. They are considered a grindcore band, but they are so much more than that. They can kick down in ten seconds a million times more sonic savagery than most bands can accomplish on an entire album. Their fast parts are as blazing as their breakdowns are crushing, all topped off by some of the most grit-teethed-pissed political lyrics. Imagine a pack of wild dogs ferociously mauling a small child, but only because they are righteous and the child is evil. That is BENUMB. And, on a sidenote, lead singer Pete Benumb is one of the most selfless, caring, honest, and awesome dudes in the world. Here is this grindcore king who has spent years now supporting a hardcore scene (namely, Norcal's) that was hardly even aware of him or his own band and scene. Seriously, ask anyone 'round these parts who knows the score and they'll tell you that Pete is a fucking saint. PREMONITIONS OF WAR hold their own on their half of the record, with their tunes leaning more towards the modern-day metalcore chaos that combines the proficiency of BOTCH with the metal attack of DARKEST HOUR. This whole fucking album is a monster and you'd be hard pressed to find a more terrifying and satisfying "extreme" release this year. (STM)
(www.thorprecords.com)

BIOHAZARD
"Means To An End" CD
What does it matter? It sounds like BIOHAZARD and people who like BIOHAZARD will like this. Personally, I don't think they have ever or will ever release anything as great as "State Of The Union Address". So, if you like their albums after that one, you'll like this. Otherwise, just go listen to "State Of The Union Address". (STM)
(www.spvusa.com)

BLACKLISTED
"We're Unstoppable" CD
These guys aren't lying. They very well could be unstoppable. The latest release from Deathwish, BLACKLISTED play a style of hardcore similar to what HOPE CONSPIRACY was doing a few years back. These aren't new tracks, but instead combine their last EP on Stillborn, and their 7" from 2003. This is a great record, full of energy and chaos, and makes me want to hear new stuff from these dudes bad. Philadelphia has one of the best hardcore scenes, and BLACKLISTED show that they are more than capable of carrying on that tradition. These guys must be insane live. (MWB)
(www.deathwish.com)

BLACKLISTED
"We're Unstoppable" CD
Do you miss AMERICAN NIGHTMARE? Yeah, we all do. But don't worry, here's the next best thing. Not so much the music, though it does have that familiar AN / RIGHT BRIGADE, TYF feel to it, but it also has some familiar chunky Philly moshcore. The singer, however, is dead fucking bang Wes Eisold in both sound and delivery. The lyrics also have a Wessian quality, though not as skillful (how could they be?) Now, I'm not knocking this band. I'll say it straight out: this band is awesome. A thousand times better than most hardcore bands out there. If you like that rough and tumble NYHC crossed with the focused aggression of old school Boston, couple with some of that tasty city boy desperation and depression, this is the band for you. Great stuff that you will not regret picking up. (STM)
(www.deathwish.com)

BLACK TIE BOMBERS
"Art is Easy" CD
This is some good stuff. Self-released CD of snotty pop-punk, in the vein of SCREECHING WEASEL or MR T EXPERIENCE, but with some gruffness thrown in. I keep thinking this is what it would sound like if THE LAWRENCE ARMS started playing pop-punk. It's really that good. Catchy, fun, punk rock. (MWB)
(www.blacktiebombers.com)

BLUE MONDAY
"Rewritten" CD
Bridge Nine records just keeps pumping out one amazing hardcore record after another. The latest of their releases is BLUE MONDAY, a straight-forward hardcore band which reminds me a lot of the music from IN MY EYES combined with the vocals of BURIED ALIVE. That's a pretty amazing mix. Twelve songs of pure power and brutal emotion, blazing from start to finish. Awesome disc. (MWB)
(www.bridge9.com)

BLUE MONDAY
"Rewritten" CD
I like these canucks. They take two admirable forms of the core, the trashy pissed punk-influenced core of NEGATIVE APPROACH and the youth revivalism of REDEMPTION 87, TYF, and IN MY EYES, and meld them together not to sound like a youth crew / trashy punk core hybrid, but rather to just sound like Blue Monday. A great new album from a great band. (STM)
(www.bridge9.com)

BLUSOM
"The Metapolitan" CD
Savvy electronic production meets pop songwriting in this new release. You get a little hit of MODEST MOUSE, but other than that, it's hard to draw comparisons. Their sound is sometimes even brash and hard to hear, but good hooks always seem to reign over abrasive backdrops. (LD)
(www.secondnaturerecordings.com)

BOLDTYPE
self-titled EP
First of all, for a self-released EP, this thing sounds fucking amazing. It was recorded, mixed and mastered at The Blasting Room, so I'm not at all surprised by that. Good choice by the band to go there. As for the music itself, it's good stuff; powerful, fast, aggressive hardcore punk rock, in the vein of GOOD RIDANCE. The vocals sound very familiar but I can't put my finger on who it reminds me of. Either way, this is a seriously good sound being created. Better than the majority of the swill that has been getting signed left and right lately. Somebody find these guys a home. (MWB)
(www.boldtypemusic.com)

BOSIO
"This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things" EP
First off, let's discuss the name. It's pretty much the most amazing name ever. Well not really. But these four dudes are from Milwaukee, a city that hasn't seen a good baseball team since the early-80s. In the late 80s and early 90s, they were pretty horrible, and one of very few bright spots was Chris Bosio, a big, fat, ugly-ass pitcher. I'm gonna assume that this is where they got their name, and if that's true, that rules. As for the music – they're playing pop rock in the vein of STARTING LINE or FALL OUT BOY. They actually sound pretty similar to both bands. So they're not doing anything new here, but what they do, they do well, so I'm guessing you'll start to see this name floating around everywhere pretty soon. Just remember – Chris Bosio = big fat ugly pitcher. Bosio = pop rock band. Got it? Good. (MWB)
(www.simplybosio.com)

BOYS NIGHT OUT
"Train Wreck" CD
Ok, so take everything you know about BOYS NIGHT OUT. Take all the screaming, all the craziness, all the melodies. Throw all that out the window. Ok, not ALL of

it – but seriously, this is about as stark a change from one CD to the next as any in recent memory. The one-sheet for this release said that they lean more heavily on their PINK FLOYD influences on this release, and they aren't lying. Far more singing involved on this, with some screaming here and there – but it's few and far between as compared to what they did on Make Yourself Sick. This CD is really good; probably better than their first effort. Actually, it is definitely better. I'm just hope their fans can grasp what they're doing, and appreciate the music and get past the fact that (gasp!) they rely more heavily on their natural talents and not their ability to yell. (MWB)
(www.ferretstyle.com)

BRAT ATTACK
"From This Beauty Comes Chaos & Mayhem" CD
Raging political punk rock from Canada. Think ANTI-FLAG with a couple of gnarly female vocalists (well, that's what it sounds like to me!) and you'll be a good part of the way there. I dunno if this is their debut. But they sound like they're on the verge of being excellent. (RK)
(Underground Operations / www.undergroundoperations.com)

BREAK THE SILENCE
"Merciless Mercenary" CD
One song is called "Flea Faced God". Another is called "Scroll Of Anger". The singer is named A.P. Hellthroat. These reviews just write themselves. But yo, about that singer's name, Hellthroat needs to be a band name. Somebody please start a shitty metal band and call it Hellthroat. Then record a demo, send it to me, and I'll make fun of it because it has demons and dragons and shit on the cover. (STM)
(www.demonzend.com)

BREEDER RESISTOR
"Sixteen" CD EP
Now this is more like it. The dude from LATCHKEY turns out half a dozen pop / hardcore gems, up there with the best of STRIKE ANYWHERE and DILLINGER 4. This is really good. Well worth checking out, for sure. (RK)
(Basement Records / www.basementrecords.com)

THE BRIGHT AND HOLLOW SKY
"Gemstate" CD
This lovely Austin band constructs lush melodies of pop serenity much like BUILT TO SPILL & VERSUS. With a generous sixteen tracks, you'll have plenty of time this summer to listen to this album each night at dusk. Highly recommended! (LD)
(www.popfaction.com)

BULLET TRAIN TO VEGAS
"We Put Scissors Where Our Mouths Are" CD
I'm truly psyched about this band. These guys are one of a slew of recent signing that has restored my hope in Nitro Records, including A WILHELM SCREAM, NO TRIGGER, and THE LETTERS ORGANIZE. They're building quite the roster over there, and not one based on trends, but one based on truly unique artists who play GOOD music – it's groundbreaking, right? So these guys played revved-up Indie-Punk with some serious balls. The energy they bring to this release is reminiscent of AT THE DRIVE-IN or THE BRONX, so you know it's got something behind it. Awesome band, awesome release, awesome label. (MWB)
(www.nitrorecords.com)

BUZZOV*EN
"Welcome To Violence" CD
The best word to describe this is heavy. A collection of old tunes by an underground band from the 90's that managed to leave a lasting impression like a gnarly scar. 21 tracks of dark, heavy metal with vocals that tear through you like a battleaxe. (LD)
(www.alternativetentacles.com)

CALIBAN vs. HEAVEN SHALL BURN
"Split Program II" CD
These two metalcore master teamed up a few years back on a split and, seeing how awesome that one turned out, have returned for a second round. Both bands deliver the goods, combining their Euro metal mastery with some of the most brutal breakdowns this side of DIECAST. A must have for fans of crushing metalcore. (STM)
(www.lifeforcerecords.com)

CAMPGROUND EFFECT
"The Flight Seat EP" CDEP
Here's some middle of the road NIRVANA style music, right down the slurred Kurt Cobain drawl. In fact, they seem to have studied all of Seattle's finest in order to perfectly capture their own sound. After realizing this, it's hard to listen further. Not bad but nothing new. (LD)
(www.thelocalcannery.com)

THE CATCH
"Get Cool" CD
This female foursome constructs a catchy mix of hipster indie pop reminiscent of IMPERIAL TEEN. Self-described as a four piece sass-attack, their delivery is cocky in a way that most grrls bands usually are. One member plays in UNITED STATES OF ELECTRONICA, but you don't have to hold it against her. Rocks! (LD)
(www.madeinmexicorecords.com)

CHAMPION
"Time Slips Away" CD
CHAMPION might very well be the kings of straight-edge hardcore. Fast and furious with strong vocals, these guys always remind me of the early days of REACH THE SKY. Ian (from RTS) always has had, and still does have, one of the best voices in hardcore, and Jim sounds a lot like Ian. The sound isn't too far distant from each other, either, which is a good thing because RTS were one of the best. Anyway, this CD brings together CHAMPION's first two EPs with Bridge Nine, and they sound better than ever. A great introduction to the band for those kids out there who haven't heard 'em. Band like CHAMPION are keeping the 'core alive, so respect them and support them! (MWB)
(www.bridge9.com)



CHAMPION
"Time Slips Away" CD
The current kings of youth crew hardcore return with another batch of finger-pointing, two-stepping, floor punching, stage diving, dunk-rocking, camo-sporting, Gatorade-guzzling, hood-up-on-the-way home hardcore anthems that have made them such a force to reckon with these days. You will not be disappointed. Highly recommended for fans of the old school (YOT, JUDGE, INSTED), the new (STAY GOLD, CARRY ON, TEN YARD FIGHT) and the Northwestern (TRIAL, UNDERTOW). (STM)
(www.bridge9.com)

CIPHER
"Children Of God's Fire" CD
This band really grabbed me by the throat and didn't let go until the album was done. Political charged new school (not nu school) metal with an obvious hardcore influence that will absolutely satisfy the masses that love KILLSWITCH ENGAGE, LAMB OF GOD, and BLEEDING THOUGH. Brutal, brilliant metal with a responsible, thoughtful head on it's burly shoulders. Get into it. (STM)
(www.uprisingrecords.com)

THE CITY ON FILM
"In Formal Introduction" CD
So this is the first full-length release from THE CITY ON FILM, the solo-ish work of Bob Nanna, better known for his time in the seminal indie rock band BRAID, and letter in Vagrant's HEY MERCEDES. I say solo-ish because, while it's all Bob's music, vocals, etc – he's got one hell of a band behind him, including Todd Bell, who was also in those two previously mentioned bands with Mr. Nanna. Ok, so as for the music itself, it's great. It's very reminiscent of the more mellow BRAID moments at most times, but it also has a few numbers that pick up the pace and are extremely catchy, kind of like the early HEY MERCEDES – see 'For Holly' for instance. But that's not to say that COF is just an extension of Bob's prior work. Obviously you're going to get some of their sound. But this is something different than that. But whenever Bob sings, you can't help but be reminded of BRAID. Maybe that's just me, I don't know – I was and am huge BRAID fan, so that could play into it. Either way, Bob has managed to create a beautiful CD, which is far more 1997 than 2005, which is always welcome. It's bizarre how something that reminds you of 8 years ago can be more fresh than something that is created today, but that's just the way it is. (MWB)
(www.grandtheftautumn.com)

CLOSET MONSTER
"We Rebuilt This City" CDEP
7 blasts of sing-along declarations of political angst. These Canadian pop-punk stalwarts combine the best elements of AGAINST Me!, DILLINGER 4 and UNITAS. And roll them into a rollicking tour de-force. Excellent stuff. (RK)
(Underground Operations / www.undergroundoperations.com)

COMBAT WOUNDED VETERAN
"This Is Not an Erect All-Red Neon Body" CD
Line up the body bags, CWV's 42 song blitzkrieg is about start. Compiled here is the out-of-print stuff, tracks from comps, etc, invoked over the span of this notorious band's blood-soaked career. You even get lyrics to every putrid cut cuz trying to figure out the singer's death-wail would be futile. In a word- awesome. (LD)
(www.noidearecords.com)

COOL HAND LUKE
"The Fires of Life" CD
Still sometimes manufactured rock freaks me out. It always sounds the same lots of layers, to the point of overproduction and plenty of echo and dynamics. But the problem is, it usually feels soulless. Such is the case with this record. (LD)
(www.floodgaterecords.com)

COOTERS
"Punk Metal" CD
These guys definitely play metal, with a bit of driving punk. And a dash of southern rock. They incorporate the driving rhythms of MOTORHEAD, some fancy lead work, and political lyrics, to a punk sensibility, and sense of melody. Think the first SUICIDAL TENDENCIES LP duking

it out with the better bits of LYNKRD SKYNRD. Their third full length and it rocks. (RK)
(Profane Existence / www.profaneexistence.com)

CRASH AND BURN
"The Value of Mistrust" CD
Nobody produces punk rock bands like the great city of Boston. It seems like every great Street Punk band out there today is either from Boston or is produced by someone from Boston or has some sort of connection to Boston. Anyway, the latest to join the ranks is CRASH AND BURN, and they make it clear that they're for real on this blistering release, their debut on Thorp. Think BLACK FLAG and THE UNSEEN meet BLOOD FOR BLOOD and MOTORHEAD. Yeah, it's that good. These guys have been around for a while, but are just now starting to be given the attention they deserve. This is far and away the best CD I've heard this month, and aside from the new DROPKICK MURPHYS and UNSEEN records (both from Boston – what a coincidence), the best CD I've heard this year. (MWB)
(www.thorprecords.com)

CRASH AND BURN
"The Value Of Mistrust" CD
Holy shit, this thing came along and hit me like a freight train. I didn't know what to expect when I got it in the mail, but as soon as I pushed play on my trusty stereo, I was enthralled by a prison yard riot of mosh-soaked tough guy hardcore, crust punk, murderous doom sludge, some roadhouse rock n' roll, and metallic brutality that would impress both the longhair hessians as well as the hoody and cammo contingent. An amazing find. Cross RAMALLAH with DIECIDE, add some CARNIVORE, a dash of MOTORHEAD, some SSD, and pour a bottle of MOLLY HATCHET over it, and set it on fire. Buy this CD. (STM)
(www.thorprecords.com)

CUT CITY
self-titled CDEP
As a warm up for their forthcoming full-length album, this band releases a little EP of four dance-punk anthems. Calling to mind the RAPTURE & INTERPOL, this Swedish group seems poised to outshine most of those who've jumped on this popular new trend. Very catchy and I can't wait to hear more from them. (LD)
(www.goldstandardlabs.com)

CZOSNEK
"Illegal...." LP
Heavy duty Czech punk rock. This release is dark, noisy and methodical. Comes with punk rock board game with extensive instructions and game pieces. Overall, this is a weird mix of creepy fun, especially when all of the sudden the record breaks into what appears to be Czech show tunes. (JC)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie / P.O. Box 53 / 34-400 Nowy Targ / Poland)

DARKEST HOUR
"Undoing Ruin" CD
Metalcore veterans DARKEST HOUR are back with their third album, this time concentrating more on the metal and less on the 'core. Fast, furious, and tight guitars bring this CD to heights never previously reached by this band, sound more like a traditional Sweedish Metal band than the metalcore that has so glutted the American independent music scene of recent years. The vocals remain gruff and truly metal. In a time when so many band are incorporating harmonies and melodies into their vocal stylings, DARKEST HOUR have done the exact opposite. This CD marks the highest of heights that DARKEST HOUR have yet reached, and show that they have a future for themselves once the trend of metalcore dies. (MWB)
(www.victoryrecords.com)

DARKEST HOUR
Undoing Ruin" CD
DH's newest album is also their most crushing. They've turned up the metal to full fucking burn and deliver an album that has absolutely no connection to the hardcore scene from which they sprung and instead delivers a flawless assault of metallic glory. Combining best parts of Swedish tech metal with American brute force metal to create a complete package. Recommended highly for all fans of metal, but especially you younguns that love SHADOWS FALL, LAMB OF GOD, et al. (STM)
(www.victoryrecords.com)

THE DEAD 60S
self-titled CD
This CD falls into the new category that I like to call; retro-post punk. Hints of early Joe Jackson and GANG OF FOUR, with a big city dub affinity. Entertaining and instantly familiar. (JC)
(Epic)

DEAD LETTER DEPT.
"Rock N Roll Hates You" CD
An engaging collection of slightly off-kilter power-pop. Definitely not at the bubblegum end of the spectrum. DKD specialize in driving, jangly tunes, bittersweet an owing considerably more to early WIRE than CHEAP TRICK. A stellar production by a WEAKERTHAN highlights the strength of this one. (RK)
(Underground Operations / www.undergroundoperations.com)

DEAD HEARTS
self-titled CD
This thing is great. At first, I thought it sounded like INTEGRITY (good Integ, like "Systems"). But it caught a little melody, a looseness to it's delivery that made it a little more human than the monster that is Integ and I started thinking it sounded like SUICIDE FILE. But there was this weird rock n' roll (sorta cock rocky) but smooshed into some good ol' punk rock melody (like old school punk) and then it hit me: NERVE AGENTS. So what we've got here is THE NERVE AGENTS covering SUICIDE FILE at an INTEGRITY show. And that, my friend, is all fucking good. Listen, most hardcore bands don't impress me (really, most suck shit and should choke and die for their lack of substance), but this band blew my hair back and you need to get into them. (STM)
(www.stateofmindrecordings.com)

DEATH BY STEREO
"Death for Life" CD
They're back again. One of the most well-respected and influential hardcore bands of the past 10 years, DEATH BY STEREO isn't new to the game. They know what they're doing, and they've always done it well. Reviewing this CD is like reviewing a BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN CD; it's obviously good. While it's got the classic, time-tested DBS sound, they've appear to have been trying something a little different this time around, and it works. The sound, to me, is honestly deeper and harder than anything they've done in recent years. The vocals go back more to the hardcore screaming than the singing style they've used in the past. The singing is still there, too, and it's balanced nicely with the other vocals. This is some seriously good shit, but what else would you expect from DEATH BY STEREO? (MWB)
(www.epitaph.com)

DEMONS AND WIZARDS
"Touched By The Crimson King" CD
Holy shit, normally I'd clown on a band like this and say something about demons and wizards, but I'll be damned, they beat me to it. They've made a preemptive strike. They've got hand! Shit. Whatever. It's still an album about demos and wizards, so 1 win. No, we all lose. (STM)
(www.spvusa.com)

THE DETONATIONS
"Spy You In A Magazine b / w T.V. Has Eyes" 7"
The DETONATIONS feature ex-members of SEX HUNTER and THE DRAGS and they play some mighty fine trashed out rock and roll. These guys hail from New Orleans and I gotta think that seeing them in some dank New Orleans dive would be a blast. (JC)
(Big Neck / P.O. Box 8144 / Reston, VA 20195)

DEW-SCENTED
"Issue VI" CD
Are you dead fucking serious with that name? Dew-Scented? That was the best you could come up with? (STM)
(www.nuclearblast.com)

THE DICTATORS
"Viva Dictators!" CD
Man, what a great band! This is a live set, every song on here is awesome (not to mention hilarious) and they still managed to leave off my favorite track "Borneo Jimmy." There are only a few bands out there that I can recommend everything that they have ever put out; the DICTATORS are one of those special few. If they have put out a bad release, I haven't heard it. It's also pretty amazing that the line–up is the same minus the drummer that they had on their 1975 debut, yet they sound as fresh as ever. (JC)
(escapimusic.com)

DISCORDANCE AXIS
"Our Last Day" CD
This is the last offering from DA as they are now defunct. This collection is of unreleased tracks, covers of DA songs by bands they've influenced, and the full version of the band's collaboration with MERZBOW. The definition of grindcore. (LD)
(www.hydrahead.com)

DISCOVER AMERICA
"Psychology" CD
If this isn't BRIGHT EYES, I'll eat my foot! Oh god, it's not! Well maybe not my foot...But really this guy sounds just like him which is really annoying! This is basically a rip-off of "Digital Ash in a Digital Urn." Color me utterly unimpressed. (LD)
(www.toothandnail.com)

DISENGAGE
"Application For An Afterlife" CD
I can't seem to figure this band out. And I'm betting that nobody else really can, either. When, they're good, they're pretty good – I was honestly psyched when I heard the first track, "Pharmacyland." When they're bad, they're almost awful – try and listen to Fever Dreams all the way though, I dare you. When they're good, they're like a slightly more melodic, less technically sound version of BOY SETS FIRE. When they're bad, they sound like every radio crap band out there. My advice to them; scratch what they're doing, go back to the drawing board, figure out how to write more songs with power and energy like the opening track and less with boring, go-nowhere buildups that never come to a climax like most of the rest of the CD, and then we'll talk. (MWB)
(http: / / www.fracturedtransmitter.com)

DISRESPECT
"Complete 2004 Recordings" CD
Their first 2 EPs, collected here, for those that prefer their discs smaller, shinier, and lighter in hue. Various dudes (used in its non-gender specific terminology!) from

MISERY and Profane Existence Magazine join together to bring back the glories of early 80s UK punk. Think CHAOS UK's first EP, GBH at their prime, along with early ABRASIVE WHEELS (pre rock). As an added bonus, there's L7, ABRASIVE WHEELS and TURBONEGRO covers. Excellent. Bringing it all back! Just like the good old days! Etc, etc... (RK)
(Profane Existence / www.profaneexistence.com)

THE DIVINING
"Reprisal" CD
Total fucking shreddage, bro. This is all that is shred. Where some bands are all mosh, this band is all shred. Combine Swedish metal shreddage with Norcal 80's thrash shreddage with some melodic shreddage and you're totally shredding with these shreddagers. (STM)
(www.dressedtokill.org)

DONNYBROOK!
"Lions In This Game" CD
The next best thing to BLOOD FOR BLOOD is DONNYBROOK, the Dual-singer powerhouse hardcore troop from Los Angeles that delivers pulverizing hardcore anthems that combine that nasty mid 90s tough guy hardcore mosh of MADBALL, 25TALIFE, and SKARHEAD with the two-step core of LIGHTS OUT and MENTAL so popular today. Man, I cannot recommend this band enough to any true hardcore kid. Whether you are thugcore, youth crew, old school, new school, straight edge, or drunk as fuck, this band will not let you down. The real deal. The raw deal. Yeah, a KILLING TIME for the future. (STM)
(www.handofhoperecords.com)

DROPKICK MURPHYS
"The Warrior's Code" CD
So here we go again – yet another full-length from the kings of Boston Punk Rock, yet another chance to argue that they are in fact the greatest punk band alive, and another chance to heap praise on to a group of guys who continually break their own mold and redefine what a punk band can be. Phew. So I'm just gonna say it – The Warrior's Code is the best thing that DROPKICK MURPHYS have ever done. Yes, better than Do or Die. Better than Blackout! Better than anything. They've managed to stay true to their form, blending the best of punk rock and a touch of old-school hardcore with a heavy dose of Celtic rock, but this time incorporate the sound of old time rock and roll as well. Songs like Sunshine Highway and The Burden stand above anything these guys have done in the past. Al Barr shows how far he's come vocally since his days of growling for THE BRUISERS by singing without the benefit of a backing band in The Green Fields of France. Everyone in this band – all seven members – get their chance to show what they're made of on this CD, and all come out on top. Tim Brennan, the most recent addition to the lineup, displays his full range of talents, playing the mandolin, accordion, and tin whistle, and truly ties this CD together. I can't say enough good things about this CD. They've done it again, and they've managed to elevate their stature even higher, and are in fact the greatest punk band active today. (MWB)
(www.hell-cat.com)



DRUNK HORSE
"In Tongues" CD
DRUNK HORSE breathes new life into old stoner rock. A double-barreled bong load of vintage sounding rock with a punk attitude. If this record was released in 1974 it probably would have sold a million copies. (JC)
(www.teepeerecords.com)

DUNGEN
"Ta Det Lugnt" CD
I love it when a CD of international rock finds its way to the hearts & ears of America. And that's just what this great album has done – garnering swells of underground press attention. To me, it's a fantastic record of modern psychedelic that will please fans of GHOST, THE WHO, PELICAN, PINK FLOYD:.. I mean it will appeal to almost everyone who likes a touch of the theatrical with their rock soup. (LD)
(www.kemado.com)

DUPLEX
"Album By Duplex" CD
This CD is pretty annoying. Mostly it's cutesy-poo crap that is trying to be real clever, but just comes off pretentious. This is supposed to be kind of an alternative kid's record, for (according to their bio) "parents who are sick of suffering at the hands of Elmo and Barney". As a parent of a now near junior high schooler, I found that the best ways not to suffer crud like Elmo and Barney, is to turn the TV off and give the kid a book. If you want to hip them to good music, try "Pet Sounds" by the BEACH BOYS, THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS, or the first couple of RAMONES records. (JC)
(Mint / 1359 Queen St. W #3 / Toronto, On / Canada)

DUTCH DUB
self-titled CD
Here's someone who really nails it on the head. Synth music that doesn't come across as kitsch. Seems to have really learned a lot from those ENO and SUICIDE records. The CD kind of meanders towards the end, but there is enough of the good stuff on here to give it solid thumbs up. (JC)
(Record Collection / 1223 Wilshire Blvd #811 / Santa Monica, CA 90403)

ELECTRIC EEL SHOCK
"Go USA" CD
US edition of "Go Europe" from the new Japanese garage / rock n roll sensations. Except that they're not that sensational really. Imagine if you took the pomp and AC / DC out of TURBONEGRO. Or the cojones from IGGY POP. It's not terrible. Just not quite grabbing. (RK)
(Gearhead / www.gearheadrecords.com)

EL TORO
"May & Marielle" CD
While, at times, this record seems to be painfully honest love letters, for the most part it is a classic emo album. (that's the same thing, huh?) This will shoot an arrow through the heart of any real believer. (LD)
(www.undecidedrecords.com)

EMBRACE THE END
"Counting Hallways To The Left" CD
It almost brings a tear to the eye. I'm so proud of these kids. I saw this band form a few years back from the ashes of some enjoyable but green hardcore bands to become one of Norcal's most impressive bands. While "metalcore" has become one of the most formulaic, trite, and phony of underground music's myriad genres and sub genre, ETE comes like a carpet bombing and just levels the fucking playing field. They have the bloody knuckles brutality of HATEBREED, the symphonic mastery of AT THE GATES, the skin peeling speed of SLAYER, the dark viciousness of CANNIBAL CORPSE, and the youthful exuberance of their pals ANIMOSITY all stitched together impeccably and lit afire upon a concrete foundation of years spent in the blood flooded trenches of the Norcal hardcore scene. An invigorating production of Zach Ohren only serves to do this band's power justice. There's a lot of bullshit metalcore out there these days. Ignore it all. Just buy this. You'll be fine. (STM)
(www.abacusrecording.com)

ENON
"Lost Marbles and Exploded Evidence" CD / DVD
With a pedigree that boasts one-time members of BRAINIAC and BLONDE REDHEAD, this NYC trio have done some special things in the past. With that in mind, they reach into their own back catalogue on this release to collect their various singles and 7"s on one album. Considering these discs cover six years and several incarnations of the band's lineup, it's incredible how well the tracks blend together. Accompanied by a DVD that gathers the band's inventive video catalogue and some scraps of live footage, this collection is a great introduction for the uninitiated. As deceptively brainy and downright danceable as ever, the hard-to-find material makes it a solid odds-and-ends comp for long-time fans, too. Recommended. (TS)
(Touch & Go / www.touchandgo.com)

ERIC PANIC
"Catharsis" CD
Debut full-length from this new French-Canadian punker quartet. They specialize in driving, melodic pop-punk. Very reminiscent of the poise, power, and grace of SCREECHING WEASEL's finest hour - "Anthem For A New Tomorrow". Except, of course, it's all in French. But that's ok. (RK)
(Union 2112 Records / www.unionlabelgroup.com)

THE EVIL QUEENS
"First It Boils, Then It Spills" CD
Here's some tough & drunken new hard rock that calls to mind something between ALICE IN CHAINS & QUICKSAND. The arrangements seem to be more of a traditional indie-rock based sound, more loose. All in all, it's not my style, but if you like to rock out, give this a try. (LD)
(www.theevilqueens.com)

THE EYELINERS
"No Apologies" CD
I have liked a lot of the stuff that the EYELINERS have put out so far and they have at least one 7" that I thought was great. Overall, I am pretty disappointed in this release though. It's just a little too clean and generic and of the couple of best tracks on this, one is an EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS cover. I'm not giving up on the band, but I can't really recommend this. (JC)
(Blackheart / 636 Broadway / New York, NY 10012)

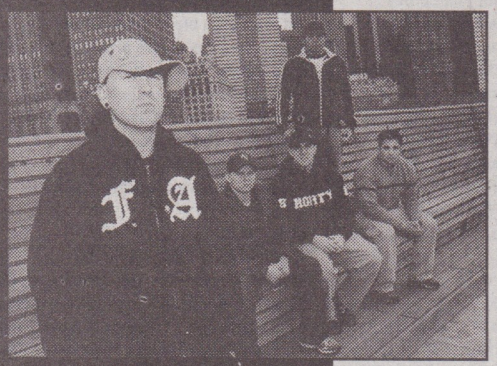
THE FAME
"Get On The Beat" CD
I have to admit, I really don't like this. I'm just getting really tired of bands raping the 1980's. How many more RICK SPRINGFIELDS do we need?? None! This slick crap that's supposed to be an ironic throwback is just making me want to throw up. (LD)
(www.the-fame.com)

FEDERATION X
"Rally Day" CD
FEDERATION X play a fierce brand of rock and roll,

with big chunky guitar riffs and thunderous yet intricate drumming. I have been a long admirer of heavy thud rock bands like BLUE CHEER and the MELVINS and these guys seem to breathe deeply from the same bong of inspiration. (JC)
(Estrus / P.O. Box 2125 / Bellingham, WA 98227)

FIFTY DAYS AT ILIUM
self-titled CDEP
Here's a nice little underground record out of Philly. It's a five piece band that reminds me a little – at least as far as vocals go – of TEAM DRESCH. Meaning, that they are melodic punk rock with female vocals. It's really a great EP, and you all should seek it out. (LD)
(www.fiftydaysatilium.com)

FLASHLIGHT ARCADE
"The Art of Blacking Out" CD
This band isn't too bad; they aren't doing anything groundbreaking, just playing pop rock with some punk influences, but I gotta say this – their bio compares them to PLOW UNITED. PLOW UNITED, for those who aren't familiar with them, were an amazing band from PA in the mid-to-late 90s who played and infectious version of punk that honestly I don't think has ever been repeated. They did their own thing and followed no blueprints to create their sound. Seriously, take this history lesson and run with it – check out anything you can by them – they were on Creep Records. Go do it! Again, I'm off on a tangent...but yeah, FLASHLIGHT ARCADE is no PLOW UNITED. Nothing against them, but that comparison is unfounded and can't hold water. But yes, other than that, they do what they do well – it's catchy as hell, but PLOW UNITED it ain't. (MWB)
(www.otrrecords.com)



FLASHLIGHT ARCADE
"The Art Of Blacking Out" CD
Re-release of this 2004 effort, with a couple of new tracks. They're from Jersey, but trade in that GET-UP KIDS / JIMMY EAT WORLD sad emo pop thing that masquerades as punk these days. If that's your bag, they do it well, I s'pose. Just difficult to get excited about it. (RK)
(Rise Records)

THE FLESHTONES
"Beachhead" CD
The mighty kings of fuzz and buzz, THE FLESHTONES are back with a new release that knocks my socks off and gets my rocks off. This band has held the garage rock torch high through times when a lot of people didn't give a shit. I'm glad that they are still around (and in great form) for this new wave of garage rock enthusiasm. Peter Zaremba sings like a man on fire and in my opinion has always been one of the most underrated frontmen around. From the STROKES to the DIRTBOMBS, they all owe a bit to this band and if you haven't checked them out yet, you need to do so as soon as you can. (JC)
(Yep Roc / P.O. Box 4821 / Chapel Hill, NC 27515)

FINCH
"Say Hello To Sunshine" (CD)
After almost 5 years, Finch's new CD is here, and having liked everything they came out with previous to "Say Hello To Sunshine," I am so disappointed it's not even funny. They went from being one of the original heavy emo rock bands to an overproduced band that belongs on TRL. Not to say they're bad musicians, some of the stuff on there is pretty tricky, but the major label sound just doesn't work anymore. I'm going to be a bit embarrassed wearing their shirt I bought after "What It Is To Burn" came out. Go buy that one. Hopefully they'll still play old stuff at their shows. (NN)
(www.sharpeningbeneath.com)

FINCH
"Say Hello to Sunshine" CD
Being that the Screamo train is still moving full-throttle, you wouldn't think that one of the original bands to bring it to the masses would go out and release a CD that completely abandons their sound. You would think that they'd continue to release a sure-fire seller, and then once this train runs out of steam (we can all hope, right?) they'd jump ship to the next big thing. But not FINCH. They've acted proactively and gone out and done something completely different from anything they'd ever done in the past. I've seen the terms "unique" and "amazing" thrown around to describe this CD – but I wouldn't go so far. It is neither. This CD is pretty much a carbon copy of CAVE IN. It sounds as if they took their 'Jupiter' CD and play it on repeat for hours on end, and used that as their starting point for writing their CD. I would far rather listen to this than their last CD, and honestly it's not a bad CD – I just don't want to hear how they've gone and done something completely amazing and are blazing a new trail, when the truth is this trail was blazed for them five years ago. (MWB)
(www.geffenrecords.com)

FLY BY NIGHT
self-titled EP
Seriously, you could take any 10 CDs I get each month and play them for me 5 times, letting me look at the layout, memorize the song titles, get to know the sound – and then play songs from each release without letting me know who each band was and I would not be able to tell you the difference. You know why? Because all of these 'up and coming' bands are nothing but carbon copies of each other. They've all copied the same sound, wear the same clothes, sing the same way – even hold their mic the same way. Holding the top of the mike in the palm of your hand doesn't make you punk rock, kids. It just makes you lame. FLY BY NIGHT are no different from the rest – a group of young kids playing trendy pop rock. Add them to the heap. (MWB)
(www.flybynight.com)

FOUR LETTER LIE
"Her Escape" CD
This freshman release from Minnesota's Four Letter Lie sums up everything that we've become familiar with in melodic hardcore, and does it perfectly. Screamed verses, sung choruses, breakdowns, and one acoustic track showcase the band's complex songwriting ability, and they've got a killer live show to boot. Accomplishing this unsigned is quite a feat as well. Keep an eye on these guys. (NN)
(www.fourletterlie.com)

THE FUGUE
"Mysterious Animals" CDEP
These thrash-smashing New York bawlers come off sounding like mysterious creatures indeed. Though it's only a four-song EP, this disc packs enough wallop that, if juiced properly, might make your taste buds sore for a week. If nothing else, these tracks establish that the band is best appreciated live, as the sheer rawness of the production has a tendency to corrode what few occasional orderly moments occur amidst so much chaos here. While it's just a sneak peak, it's also a serious swat to the face - and that makes this a pretty impressive EP. (TS)
(Recommended If You Like / www.riylrecords.com)

THE FUGUE
"Mysterious Animals" CDEP
Sometimes, no matter how hard a band tries, they just don't get it right. That's what's up with The Fugue. The ingredients are all there for hardcore, reeling rock, but in the end it just ends up sounding like someone screaming over a mishmash of instrumentation. (LD)
(www.riylrecords.com)

GILES
self-titled CD
No idea where the motivation behind this one came from, but it'll certainly earn more than its share of shit-talk. You probably recognize Tommy Rogers Jr. from BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME. Well, here he goes by his middle name and makes some of the most bizarro beats [yeah, techno beats on a Victory record] this side of MINDLESS SELF INDULGENCE. Actually, that band is one of the closer lyrical cousins to this baffler, too, only MSI is both funnier and – I can't believe I'm writing this – smarter. Most of this disc is pretty preposterous, even if some of its thump tries to reel you in after a few listens. But unless you're really into centipedes or, say, Jonathan Davis' vocal work you're bound to be at least a little disappointed. And if you're into BTBAM, make that tenfold. (TS)
(Victory / www.victoryrecords.com)

GITOGITOHUSTLER
"Gito Gito Galore" CD EP
The first domestic release of this rising Japanese all girl power-pop quartet. Six tracks of muscular bubblegum mixed up with the late 70s So / Cal. melodic punk sound. Think of the GO-GOs covering tracks from the first ADOLESCENTS and AGENT ORANGE LPs. They could be huge. (RK)
(Gearhead / www.gearheadrecords.com)

GOREROTTED
"A New Dawn For The Dead" CD
Dudes, they're called Gorerotted. If I need to say anything more, it probably isn't for you.
(www.metalblade.com)

GRAVES BROTHERS DELUXE
"Light" CD
This is the sort of music that would be playing in your head, were you lost and alone on a dirty dark road. Local bay area band playing sort of a creepy, druggy nod to rockabilly, torch songs and NICK CAVE. (LD)
(www.goodforks.com)

HANK JONES
"Saturdays Of Thunder" CD
An upbeat troop that treats "posi" as a mood rather than an ethic, HJ cross young punk vigor of MINOR THREAT with the melodic good times of NFG. (STM)
(www.undecidedrecords.com)

HASTE THE DAY
"Burning Bridges" CD
Ever get a record, and no matter how loud and moshy

and brutal it is, you still think, "meeeh." Well, that applies to almost all metalcore these days and HTD is no real exception. It's really good for what it is, it's just that what it is isn't especially special. It sounds a lot like POISON THE WELL, so, yeah, if you dig POISON THE WELL, you'll probably like this. Not a bad album, just nothing that would make me want to buy a shirt. (STM)
(www.solidstaterecords.com)

HATESPHERE
"The Killing" CDEP
You gotta love it when you come across a preamble to a CD that says "This piece of shit was recorded at Jailhouse Studios, Hersens, Denmark." Fortunately, this Danish metal unit is anything but shit. Serving as a teaser for their upcoming fourth full-length album, The Killing EP delivers it fast, furious and representative of what you'd hear out of everything from Hatebreed to Slayer. "The Will of God" is the strongest of the four tracks, which displays brutal thrash and winding guitars including a snazzy solo. Rounding out The Killing EP is rowdy cover of Suicidal Tendencies' immortal "Trip at the Brain," which is faster than the original, and Hatesphere makes it their own with horns-up solos, even if Rocky George of Suicidal has more soul to his. If you've never heard Suicidal's version, get around it as soon as you can; to this day, not many bands can duplicate the surf-slam crossover sound Suicidal evolved from its hardcore punk roots. As for Hatesphere, this EP is indispensable if you're a fan, arguably worth a pickup if you're just browsing casually. (RVH)
(SPV, www.spv.de / eng / news.html)

HATESPHERE
"The Killing" CDEP
Dudes, your band is called Hatesphere. That's hella not good. Metal by metal dudes. It's good, but nothing mew or outstanding. They do a Suicidal cover, so that wins them some points. (STM)
(SPV, www.spv.de / eng / news.html)

HEAVY TRASH
self-titled CD
From Jon Spencer (of BLUES EXPLOSION) & Matt Verta-Ray (of SPEEDBALL BABY) comes this new stripped down roots'n'roll duo. It's a little bit country, a little bit ELVIS, and lots of swagger. Fans of early rockabilly, 50's underground rock and the aforementioned artists, this is for you. (LD)
(www.yeproc.com)

HEY MERCEDES
"Unorchestrated" EP
So here it is...the final ever release from HEY MERCEDES. This post-mortem EP showcases some of the band's final recordings, including a Japanese bonus track and a compilation track, as well as some songs from the 'Loses Control' sessions that weren't used, and closes out with a live version of Un-orchestrated. Everything these guys have ever done, from the days of BRAID all the way through the HEY MERCEDES years, has been done with class, and this EP is no different. All the songs on this CD are prototypical HEY MERCEDES songs, and again show that they've created their own sound over there years that has never been compromised, and never been mimicked, which in this day and age, is something truly amazing. Scooter can give me all the shit he wants for being a sissy, but I'm gonna miss these guys. Bob and Todd are two of the nicest guys I've met in the business, and I can't wait to support all of their future endeavors. (MWB)
(www.grandtheftautumn.com)

HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW
"Life In Dreaming" CD
The first symptoms appear 52 seconds into the full-length debut from these Jersey rockers. The song is "Bleed For You," a gruesome and affecting recount of a rape, and its choral hook bursts with so much boisterous energy that it sounds mighty impressive moments later when the ensuing dichotomy almost makes the tragedy more gut-wrenching. Later, "A Minor Detail" starts with one of those huge, duelling harmonies that Adam Lazzara and John Nolan used to handle, before countless other bands botched them. Fortunately, HIPV have done their homework and the results hit hard. As with most of "Life In Dreaming," the care with which HIPV handles the heart-wringing stuff outlasts the clichés they sometimes get stuck on. And Spencer Peterson might be the best drummer in this corner of the punk section. Ultimately, the diagnosis is undeniable: this disc's sure to become a guilty pleasure for some, and a life-long (or at least until high school's finished) favorite for many. (TS)
(Drive-Thru / www.drivethrurecords.com)

HO-AG
"Pray For Worms" CDEP
If you're into the psychotic, off-kilter stylings of, say, MELT-BANANA, this band is worth checking out. They combine noise-rock with eerie haunted house music spliced with a goofy, nerd kind of vibe. This lil' EP is sure to give you unsettling dreams it's basically BEETLEJUICE in album form. (LD)
(www.ho-ag.com)

THE HOLY FIRE
self-titled CDEP
I usually don't bag on people's lyrics, but these are pretty lame. I'm not going to quote them; let's just leave it at that. The music is pretty interesting alternative / new rock / whatever. I just don't know if this band has found their niche sound yet. (LD)
(www.downpeninsula.com)

HOOK & THE DAGGERS
"This is Ballroom Thrash" CD
This CD doesn't let up! Hectic, up tempo punk that reminds me of a mix between the TEEN IDLES and the first couple of A.F.I. records. Charming songs like 'Radioactive Kiss (She's A Scientist)", "Judy Is a Trustafarian" and "Self Proclaimed Anarchists are Usually Just Douche Bags" totally won me over. This is a CD that I more every time I listen to it. (JC)
(Moodkiller / P.O. Box 11561 / Olympia, WA 98508)

HOSTAGE LIFE
"Sing For The Enemy" CD EP
6 snotty punk as fuck (with brains to match, which is always nice) tunes from 5 Canadian skate-punkers. They turn in a wonderful, gritty, HOT WATER MUSIC collides with ANTI-FLAG collection of gnarly anthems. We need more. For sure. (RK)
(Underground Operations / www.undergroundoperations.com)

HOUSTON CALLS
"A Collection of Short Stories" CD
These guys sound a lot like MIDTOWN to me, so it's no surprise that they signed to Rushmore Records, the sub-label of Drive-Thru. I'm not sure why they have a second label, because the majority of the bands sound like they'd fit right in on Drive-Thru. I mean, if you're gonna do two completely different styles of labels, it makes sense – see Epitaph with Anti – but I just don't get this. But hey, whatever. Either way, these guys are playing Drive-Thruesque pop-rock, and they do it pretty well. Solid release. (MWB)
(www.rushmorerecords.com)

HUMAN EYE
self-titled CD
This is a current Detroit band that sounds like they could easily be a bunch of art damaged delinquents from Cleveland in the late '70s. Pretty fucking rad, chaotic punk rock that you don't hear the likes of much any more. You know, music that pisses off the squares, like it's supposed to. (JC)
(In The Red / P.O. Box 50777 / L.A., CA 90050)

HURT PROCESS
"A Heartbeat Behind" CD
2nd full length from these Brit h / c dudes. They've been listening to lots of BOY SETS FIRE and the more metallic end of STRUNG OUT, but throw in lots of pitch-perfect harmonies and simple pop moments, to spice up the breakdowns and crunchy bits. It took a while, but this won me over. Big time. (RK)
(Victory Records / www.victoryrecords.com)

IN DUE TIME
"Finals Showdown" CD
This thing screams Florida and guess what: they are from Florida. Florida loves the mosh and this thing here is all about the mosh. Nothing terribly original, but there is nothing terribly original about the mosh. Imagine other moshy mosh bands like UNTIL THE END and HATEBREED and you'll get the picture. It's super moshtastic moshocity moshing moshingly through the mosholicious valley of mosh. (STM)
(www.strikefirstrecords.com)

INSTILLED
"Unfinished Business" CD
INSTILLED are the shit. Pure, unrelenting hardcore goodness. This album owes a heavy debt to the forefathers of the core, namely the legends of the early NYHC / L.E.S scene. If you like true old school hardcore that cuts the fat and brings the goods, look into this band. Fans of CRO MAGS, YOT, and INSTED. (STM)
(www.stateofmindrecordings.com)

INTERFUSE
"Closed Doors Open Tracks" CD
This is a delightful cross between 7 YEAR BITCH & FUGAZI. Alternating guy / girl lead vocals, lots of guitars, some political themes. It's nice to know that good things are happening in Ohio & this is a great indie album. (LD)
(www.interfusenoise.com)

ISLE OF VIEW
"Gentle Firefly Radio" CD
These guys are playing radio-ized pop rock in the vein of MXPX, with a touch of that "new" "emo" "sound" thrown in. Yes, I say that sarcastically because it has all become quite a joke. I mean, just look at the band name – what the fuck does that mean? And the name of the CD? What the fuck does THAT mean?? C'mon guys. I read a review for this CD online, at riftrock.com, and it was just so dead-on that I need to quote it: "They must've known this was going to be a hit amongst the droves of emo kids who gave emo a bad name as this band continues to do such things as well. What this band needs is a bigger label to fully exploit the marketed manufactured sound this band could really put forth if they only had the right means of doing so. This album will end up making its way to re release after they hit it big with the 13 year old girls and the heart broken boys who cry "why". Break out the mini vans and get your mother's to buy you a piece of popish disgust that has no real purpose but to further the collection of catchy for the sake of catchy bands. Only you can prevent bands like this from taking off into squirrelly MTV TRL VJ introductions. The swarm of adolescence that will crowd the record stores is a site I hope to the high heavens I do not witness." (MWB)
(www.undecidedrecords.com)

J. PAGE
"Goodbye Chapel Hill" CD

How many supergroups can Gainesville produce!? I dunno; but I'm glad they do. This latest quartet follow in the venerable tradition of HOT WATER MUSIC, JAWBREAKER (complete with a fine homage on the back cover) and UNITAS, and do it effortlessly. No less that you'd expect from such pedigree. (RK)
(Nice Guy Records / www.niceguyrecords.com)

JUDGE
"What It Meant - The Complete Discography" CD
If you aren't into this band, you aren't hardcore. I said it. I don't give a fuck. This is one of those defining bands of the entire hardcore culture and I don't care what fucking faction of modern hardcore you claim allegiance to, you need to know this band. Just so all you new school dorks know, all those band you love (from 18 VISIONS to TERROR and everything in between) grew up on this band right here. Deal with it. And then go buy it. 28 hardcore classics compiled here for your listening pleasure, plus an amazing booklet. Everything that is hardcore is contained in this discography. Get it and thank me later. (STM)
(www.revelationrecords.com)



THE JUNIOR VARSITY
"Wide Eyed" CD
This is the Victory debut for these young kids who a lot of people have pinned a lot of expectations on. If you ask me, and I know you didn't, these guys are no different from the rest. They play pop music (and not even pop-punk, just the pretty, sissy stuff) just like the rest. Up tempo, full of hooks, and sugar-sweet sound will make this a big seller, I'm sure. But seriously, I can't tell them apart from the other mass of bands doing this very same thing. This style is just so static; they need someone to kick them all in the ass and get them doing something fresh and original, and THE JUNIOR VARSITY are apparently not that band. (MWB)
(www.victoryrecords.com)

THE KEEP AWAYS
self-titled CD
Debut CD from this all-girl band is a 17 minute barrage of primordial punk rock. Minnesota birthed this trio of female rockers who have only recently emerged from their teens. Good rockin' tunes for riot grrls and their lovers. (LD)
(www.trackstarmedia.com)

THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS
"Big Boss Man" CD
Man, these guys are burly looking and understandably so, I hadn't realized it but they have been around consistently since 1968!! To me, the KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS Offer up all of the best elements of southern rock, the musicianship and the deep roots. This release excavates those roots thoroughly and shows the great versatility of the band, featuring covers ranging from (late '60s) ELVIS, Dylan, Patsy cline, Hank Williams, Buck Owens and many more. The stand out track on this for me has to be the beautiful rendition of the Everly Brothers' "So Sad To See Good Love Gone Bad", which gave me chills on the first listening. This would probably be a great jumping in point for people interested in checking out the band for the first time. (JC)
(Sony)

KING AUTOMATIC
"Automatic Ray" CD
Far fuckin' out man, Voodoo Rhythm records has found us another garage god. KING AUTOMATIC is a one man band (Jay from THUNDERCRACK) and he totally rules. Down and dirty punk rock played on guitar, drums and organ all at once and it sounds like a SONICS record. There's even a KRAFTWERK cover. Awesome! (JC)
(Voodoo Rhythm / Jurastrasse 15 / 3013 Bern / Switzerland)

KUNG FU MONKEYS
"It's Coast To Coast with The..." 7" EP
KUNG FU MONKEYS = sugary pop punk, with the emphasis squarely on fun and a strong appreciation of classic rock 'n' roll and surf music. Oh, the harmonies! Oh the melodies! A good time will be had by all who give this platter a spin. (JC)
(Swimmingly.wirepipe.net)

KUNG FU MONKEYS
"Electric Tangerine Smile" Double 7" EP
I totally dig the kind of garage pop that the KUNG FU MONKEYS dole out, especially when it is in 7" form. This release gives me a double dose that doesn't disappoint, ya dig? (JC)
(Whoa Oh / 21-36 43rd St, 3 Fl. / Astoria, NY 11105)

LABEL THE TRAITOR
"The Battle of the Common" CD
This is some serious fucking shit right here. These guys are blasting out some seriously solid hardcore. Fast, tight, great gang vocal shout-outs, seamlessly blending elements of punk rock with the classic hardcore sound - they've got it all. The singer has got the perfect voice for the band. They fit somewhere between GIVE UP THE GHOST and THE HOPE CONSPIRACY. These guys have seriously created a great record here. Yet another amazing hardcore band from Pennsylvania. (MWB)
(www.fivepointrecords.com)

LA PLEBE
"Entre Cerveza, Rimo, Y Emocion" CDEP
LA PLEBE describe themselves as Barrio-street-punk-with-horns. Which is actually a pretty good description. This is their third release - an 8 track effort - and it's pretty damn good. Imagine the US BOMBS, with a Latino singer, a dynamite brass section, and some flash SUICIDAL TENDENCIES guitar leads to add some occasional spice. Songs sung in English, and Spanish (with lyrics to all the songs in both languages on the inner-sleeve). And a punked up POGUES cover to boot. Truly great stuff. (RK)
(www.laplebe.com)

LARKIN
"Reckoning" CD
I am fearing that the next big trend in punk rock is going to be Irish music. Yes, I know, it's already pretty popular, elevated to a level previously never imagined by bands like FLOGGING MOLLY and THE DROPKICK MURPHYS. But now we have a whole gaggle of bands trying to capitalize on this recent surge in popularity – and whether they are doing it because this is the music they truly want to make, or because it's the new what's next, I don't know. Bands like THE TOSSERS are real good – not quite to the level of FLOGGING MOLLY, but pretty good – good enough to get nabbed by Victory. LARKIN, however, aren't quite to that level – they've got a few spots of promise, but overall, it sounds like someone trying to do something their talent just won't allow. The vocals are lacking and the lyrics are clichéd. I just couldn't get into this album, no matter how hard I tried. Maybe I'm just being overly critical because bands like those I mentioned, and THE POGUES, are some of my all-time favorites – but to me, they're just a step below. Much like the wave of screamo bands that have bastardized GRADE, we could be in for a glut of pretenders pretty soon. (MWB)
(www.knowrecords.com)

LATTERMAN
"No Matter Where We Go...!" CD
I love this band. I love what they stand for, I love what they talk about, I love their song titles, I love everything about this band. LATTERMAN are a fucking awesome punk rock band with a lot of melody, much in the vein of GUNMOLL, GRABASS CHARLESTON, and old HOT WATER MUSIC. Seriously fun, seriously punk rock, seriously awesome Long Island band who sound like they are right outta Gainesville. These guys talk a good game, too – they make it known that they fully subscribe to and believe in the DIY-ethics that the punk rock scene was built on, something that you don't' always find today. I don't know what it is about this kind of punk rock – it never gets old. Yes, there are the bands who have been around who try to do it and just don't do it right –but LATTERMAN is not one of those bands. Definitely check these guys out. (MWB)
(http: / / www.deepelm.com /)

LAWSUIT
"Stoned To Death" CD
A greatest hits (all 10 tracks) of this virtually unknown Canadian hard rock band. Apparently, they had 3 LPs out (the first was called "Bad Boys Of Rock" to give you a little flavor) from 83-91. Well, they ain't dead, and if second-rate versions of DEF LEPPARD and THIN LIZZY B-sides sounds appealing, you'll positively drool over the 2 new tracks. The dude is a decent metal guitarist. Just not an A rank songwriter. And, I suspect, a bit of a fucking prat. (RK)
(www.lawsuitrocks.com)

LEXINGTON DOWN
"The Flicks" EP
Slightly better than the majority of the pop swill that passes by my ears, but it's still pretty generic pop-rock. They've brought absolutely nothing new to the table, and that's not a good thing. (MWB)
(www.lexingtondown.com)

THE LIFE AND TIMES
"Suburban Hymns" CD
The main dude from SHINER comes up with a new post-hardcore band. Lots of atmospheric, low-key, math (post) rock type stuff. Very moody. Early REM, MY BLOODY VALENTINE mebbe. Doesn't float my boat at all, but apparently this stuff is highly regarded in many quarters, not least by the illustrious label putting it out. (RK)
(DeSoto Records / www.desotorecords.com)

LORD HAVE MERCY ON US
"Thermidor b / w Where You Gone?" 7"
Down tempo indie punk with hints of DANZIG and Nick Cave. Has some cool, creepy lyrics that are alliterative and memorable. This is a limited edition of 200 copies, so it might be pretty hard to find, but it will be well worth the effort.
(www.lordhavemercyonus.com)

LORENE DRIVE
"Romantic Wealth" CD
Part screamo, part pop rock, all together what the kids

are looking for. It's gonna move units, it's gonna make girls scream, they're gonna be asked for autographs. Does that make it a good release? Not really. It's a shame, too – because there are parts of songs that are remind me of a band like THE LETTERS ORGANIZE, who are amazing. If they could just get their entire song to sound like this, they'd be in business. They might sell a few thousand less records, but they'd be damn good. But you can fault a band in this day and age from striking while the iron is hot and to keep releasing more of the same stuff. That's what we have here. Not quite cookie-cutter, but not exactly earth-shattering, either. (MWB)
(www.lobsterrecords.com)

LUCERO
"Nobody's Darlings" CD
Here's the fourth full length from this hard working Memphis band. Their last one, "That Much Further West," caused many a ripple in the press. This one's a little less country, more specifically Southern Rock. Nevertheless, lovers of WILCO, SON VOLT and the like will surely fall in love with this band. (LD)
(www.lucerofamily.net)

LUNGFISH
"Feral Hymns" CD
Not many bands have been around as long as this one; a good fifteen years! Their sound remains current though. It is heavy and unexpected, the foundation of the DC underground sound. This new one is just as good as their classic stuff, so be sure and pick this up. (LD)
(www.dischord.com)

MARATHON
SELF-TITLED CD
I've been a big fan of MARATHON for quite a while now. I've been lucky enough to have this full-length in my possession for about six months, and I can say I never let it leak to anyone. The same can't be said for those dicks in NO TRIGGER (inside joke). I'm stoked that this thing has now found its way to a label that supports it and to people to hear it. This is seriously one of the best punk albums that will come out this year. Think STRIKE ANYWHERE meets BAD RELIGION, with vocals that are sometimes GREEN DAY-esque. That's some serious shit right there, right? This is a burner from start to finish, firing through 13 songs, each just as good, if not better, than the last. The layout is pretty rad, too. Great dudes, great band. Get behind these guys, they deserve it! (MWB)
(www.reignition.com)

MEDICATIONS
"Your Favorite People All in One Place" CD
I first heard this band on the great DVD that Dischord put out called "Burn to Shine." It features tons of Dischord bands in a stripped down form – just their music and a camera in the living room of a house that's about to be torn down. Formed by members of the short-lived FARAQUET, this band has made an even better album here and it's sure to please any rock fan. (LD)
(www.dischord.com)

THE MENTALS
"Oh Well" CD
This Austin band seems to be hugely influenced by grungy stoner rock, most notably NIRVANA. The heroin-laced vocal slurs are right out of Kurt Cobain's mouth. If you're a die-hard fan of the 90's alternative sound, check this out. (LD)
(www.thementals.com)

MERCURYSWITCH
"Time to Shine" CD
These guys are doing something pretty crazy. Think of CAVE-IN, circa 1997, and mix it with CAVE-IN, circa 2002. Combine those two sounds and you've got MERCURYSWITCH. Pretty high praise, yes, but these guys can back it up. One minute they're melodic and math rock-esque, the next chaotic and metal, these guys are doing something pretty unique. Oh, and throw in some synths and samples for good measure. Definitely worth checking out. (MWB)
(www.indiandolarecords.com)

MINUS THE BEAR
"Menos el Oso" CD
As many bands today die by the fire, new ones spring exponentially from the ashes including this band, comprised of members of KILL SADIE, BOTCH & BLOOD BROTHERS. This is their second album of jangly, angular pop with electric bloops as a backdrop. This one doesn't seem to stick as hard as their debut, but it's still worth a listen.(LD)
(www.suicidesqueeze.net)

MISTRESS
"In Disgust We Trust" CD
Man, this thing is great. Harkening back to a time when grindcore was a nasty scary working class thing as opposed to the playground of disaffected middle-class post-ironic parodical youth, this cluster of Englishmen summon up the spirit, sound, and style of the purveyors: NAPALM DEATH, BRUTAL TRUTH, maybe a little GODLFESH, some EXTREME NOISE TERROR to great a blistering sonic slaughtering. (STM)
(www.earache.com)

MOBIUS BAND
"The Loving Sounds of Static" CD
Listen up kids, this is the hot new band for the summer. For the past few months this band's first EP has been picking up lots of attention, and now that the full length is out, I predict they will become well-respected in the indie scene. It's a mixture of indie-rock and electronica, very now and very good. (LD)
(www.ghostly.com)

MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK
"Commit This To Memory" CD
Arguably the most promising act in the entire Epitaph catalogue, MCS come back strong with a strapping second album. Any fears of the sophomore jinx are dispelled early as the band rushes into half an album's worth of worthy follow-ups. "Make Out Kids" would've easily been one of the best songs on I Am The Movie, and while it's one of the poppiest songs on a very pop-driven record, it's the sound of MCS at their best. Unfortunately, it's one of the few songs where Jesse Johnson's moog is elevated in the mix. On the other hand, Justin Pierre continues his evolution as this band's ace-in-the-hole, a strangely perfect personality with the vocal range of Steven Page and a hairdo that'd make Robert Smith jealous. Critical observers are sure to study this album's production, provided by BLINK-182's Mark Hoppus, but Hoppus wisely keeps the attention on the tunes at hand. His work is entirely capable and, after a few listens, it's clear that this is one of the snappiest thinking-man's pop-punk records of recent memory. (TS)
(Epitaph / www.epitaph.com)



MURDOCK
"Amplification" CD
This is no nonsense balls out rock 'n'roll. The kind with tight leather pants, v-neck guitars and rivers of whiskey. That being said, I don't really go for this kind of stuff, but if you do, check out this new band. (LD)
(www.thelocalcannery.com)

MXPX
"Panic" CD
Who would have thought that, 10 years later, MXPX would still be putting out records? It's nothing against them, it's just not many bands make it to that 10-year mark, and even fewer make it after making the leap to the majors, and then slowly sliding back down to the Independent level. Any band that can do that and keep their sound, and sanity, in check deserves some respect. So having said that, this is yet another solid release from MXPX. Fourteen new songs, all full of the pop-punk hooks that made these guys the band that they are. I'm not going to waste my time, or your time, by comparing them to other bands, because you know who they are. Oh, and for the record – signing to Side One Dummy can NEVER be a bad thing. Good idea, MXPX. (MWB)
(www.sideonedummy.com)

MY BROKEN PROMISE
demo 2005 CD
If you think emo is on its last legs, you haven't taken note of recent sales figures by HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS, who might as well be considered the front runners of the genre. If you're a fan of the form, that's good news for you, and another band you should be hipped to is Baltimore's MY BROKEN PROMISE. I'll skip the comparables and say that this is one of the most solid demos that has crossed my desk this year. If there's any band that can roll with the screamo and pop punk sanctions, it's MY BROKEN PROMISE. Melodic and energetic jams are found aplenty here with archetype clean-scream switches and breakdowns that mercifully serve the songs instead of merely chugging along just to work a crowd, although you will likely find yourself climbing atop your fellows to reach these guys once you've learned their material. Leading this crew is vocalist Pat Lalor, whose post-pubescent wails will undoubtedly endear him to his peer audience, while drummer Anthony "Klown" Williams is the driving force which corrals his string section, Eric and Brian "Finch" Flores, and Sean Underwood into a cohesive unit. On the one hand, if you think you've heard it all in emocore lately, MY BROKEN PROMISE probably won't change your thinking. On the other, this band has an impressive confidence that has already earned them gigs with EMERY, ANATOMY OF A GHOST and THE AKA's. Enjoying a steady run of listens on Pure Volume, this tribe of youngbloods is worth checking out. (RVH)
(www.mybrokenpromiserocks.com)

THE NARRATOR
"Such Triumph" CD
Chicago band makes good with their debut full length record. Much influence comes from post rock and also from local influential indie acts. Overall, the album is good, but some cuts could have been left out. Best is track 6. (LD)
(www.flameshovel.com)

NILE
"Annihilation Of The Wicked" CD
Dudes, right off the bat, let me point out that you misspelled ANNIHILATION wrong on the promo cover. OK, this album is pretty fucking tits. The kings of scarab metal (yes, I totally just said scarab metal) return with another album of metallic glory. This is some serious death metal here, bros, and they aren't afraid to dip into some traditional mainstream metal at times. This is a behemoth of an album and you'd be a fool, not to pick it up if you have long hair, a CANNIBAL CORPSE longsleeve, black jeans, and shitty facial hair. Metal as fuck in the best possible way by a band of kings in a world of servants. (STM)
(www.relapserecords.com)

NORMA JEAN
"O' God, The Aftermath" CD
Here are a few things you need to know about the new NORMA JEAN record: A.) they have a new singer. B.) they don't, have a new name. C.) they're still pretty miffed about stuff, particularly the sea, but, whatever gets them going, its never sounded quite this good before. D.) once or twice, they try delivering something almost resembling a chorus (gasp!) by singing (gasp! gasp!). E.) not like POISON THE WELL singing exactly, since you won't find any quiet moments here, but that's band's last album isn't a bad comparison in terms of scope and nature. Some will surely site BOTCH, but it's not quite like that either. G.) as he proved on last year's THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES record, Matt Bayles is a monster behind the boards and whatever he does sounds phenomenal. But, for the three of you still with me, what's the most important thing to know? H.) When all's said and done, this will be one of the very best heavy records you hear all year. (TS)
(Solid State / www.solidstaterecords.com)

NO USE FOR A NAME
"Keep Them Confused" CD
These California punk have been playing for pretty much forever, and they've never strayed too far from their traditional style – fast drums, melodic vocals, California power-pop. To say that a band who has been together since 1987 has released their best CD to date all the way in 2005 – 18 years later – that's saying something. But that might very well be the case here with NUFAN. While keeping true to their roots and playing the fast, catchy punk rock with the best of them, they show how they've grown and matured over the years, mixing it up with some more mid-tempo songs and even throw in a slow jam or two. The slower songs are really a departure for NUFAN, but they pull it off without a hitch. I suppose that's what 18 years of practice does for a band, huh? (MWB)
(www.fatwreck.com)

NO USE FOR A NAME
"Keep Them Confused" CD
7th full length. Pretty much what you'd expect from one of the inventors (and flag-bearers) for that California melodic h / c sound. 13 new tracks, some anthems, some rockers, even a couple of ballads. Is it as good as "Leche Con Carne."? Of course not. But it IS pretty excellent nonetheless. And being a little short of perfection is a compliment in itself. (RK)
(Fat Wreck Chords / www.fatwreck.com)

NUCLEAR ASSAULT
"Third World Genocide" CD
Fuck yes! One of the first metal bands to be truly embraced by the hardcore community way back in the day returns for their first studio album in ten years and they haven't missed a fucking beat in all that time. Great stuff from one of the greatest yet criminally underrated American metal bands of all time. Get into it and find out why the legends (AF, Mags, etc) got all metal on that ass in the late eighties. (STM)
(www.spvusa.com)

NRA
"Machine" CD
This must be the seventh or eighth (at least) full length from these Dutch melodic punkers. Despite the slicked back hair, they sound a lot more NAKED RAYGUN than SOCIAL DISTORTION, and remind me a lot of what the second DAG NASTY record would've sounded like if Lance from J-CHURCH had sung it. Good stuff. (RK)
(Gearhead / www.gearheadrecords.com)

NUMBER ONE GUN
"Promises For the Imperfect" CD
These are the latest young lads to be fired from the superstar making machine of Tooth and Nail records. They are playing a style so similar to label mates ANBERLIN and TERMINAL that I bet you can't even tell them apart. If you can, you're a better person than I, because I sure as hell can't. They're gonna sell a ton of CDs and make a lot of girls swoon, that I do know. (MWB)
(www.toothandnail.com)

THE OFFSPRING
"Greatest Hits" CD
Reviewing this CD would be a waste of time. It's THE OFFSPRING. It's their greatest hits. That means you have heard them. It's nothing new; it's all the hits. If you have them on other CDs, don't buy this one. If you don't have the songs, go out and pick this up instead of buying a bunch of full-lengths. Seriously though; reviewing a greatest hits CD? Come on. (MWB)
(www.columbiarecords.com)

OLD SCRATCH REVIVAL SINGERS
"Oh, Didn't He Ramble" CD
Trap a dozen or so hillbilly gospel musicians in a haunted house and you might come up with a sound similar to this Iowa band. Equal parts TOM WAITS & BLACK HEART PROCESSION, this dark bluegrass band has made something very interesting and creepy. (LD)
(www.xoxorecords.com)

THE OMENS
"Destroy The ESP" CD
Rip roaring garage punk, man, I'm loving this release. It's down and dirty, short and to the point and the singer has a hint of Bon Scott to him. If you're into bands like the OBLIVIANS and MUMMIES (you should be), this is up your alley. (JC)
(Hipsville International / 2591 South Meade Street / Denver, CO 80219)

ONE OF THE LOUDEST TRAGEDIES EVER HEARD...
"Situation Nowhere" CD
There is sort of a glam tone to this band, perhaps stemming from their homebase of LA. Beyond that, they are a modern rock band tinged with indie and Britpop there sort of a British snarl to the singer's voice. Recommended for fans of expansive swirling rock. (LD)
(www.wedgierecords.com)

ON OUR OWN / UNDER ONE FLAG / YOUR MISTAKE
split CD
Three bands that put the "real" in "keep it all" appear together on this ten track album of unadulterated hardcore glory. This is hardcore the way it was meant to be: pissed, fast, hard, and devoid of any pomp or pose. Old school core recommended for fans of the MAGS, the BRAINS, and the BREED. Great stuff from three great bands (STM)
(www.truedestinyrecords.com)

ORION
"The Sound and the Fury" EP
I guess you could still call this sound post-hardcore, but it's got some pretty heavy doses of pop-rock mixed in there, too. Think of SPITALFIELD or NUMBER ONE FAN. Their site calls them 'progressive,' but in this day and age, it's less progressive and a lot more stagnant. (MWB)
(www.hotfootrecords.com)

OUT TO WIN
Beg For Life" CD
Hell yes. Here is a band that never gave in to the trends and have consistently thrown down their own brand of hardcore without mercy or apology. This is some big old mid 90s pummeling moshcore ala COLD AS LIFE and HATEBREED. Fans of TERROR and MPB, this is the band for you. They hardly ever enjoy the recognition they deserve, but OUT TO WIN most definitely live up to their own name. (STM)
(www.thorprecords.com)



THE PALE PACIFIC
"Rules Are Predictable" CDEP
Road-nurtured by such bands as the THERMALS & PEDRO THE LION, this band has emerged a squeaky clean bastion of the indie underground. Pop hooks, jangling distorted guitar, and vocals like the WEAKERTHANS. Catchy EP that makes me anxious for the full length. (LD)
(www.sidecho.com)

THE PALE PACIFIC
"Rules Are Predictable" CD EP
The artists formerly known as THE PALE have been around for ten years, but it's not likely anyone outside of their home state has heard much about them 'til now. Sonically similar to their fellow Seattlites ACCEPTANCE (though these boys have weaned on DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE, not JIMMY EAT WORLD), they build on their solid POLICIA! showing with four super songs here. The unpredictable hook and bounce of "Identity Theft" will grab you by the lobes and drag your grinning ass all the way to your stereo's repeat button. The five markedly different, but equally effective songs, the Pale Pacific have delivered in early '05 have us earmarking their upcoming full-length. It could be the record that finally blows this band up where they belong - into the upper echelon of dreamy indie-poppers. (TS)
(Side Cho / www.sidecho.com)

PELICAN
"March Into the Sea" CDEP
Pelican came on the scene a couple of years ago and pretty much redefined instru-metal. Akin to ISIS as well as TORTOISE, they filed away the fat until emerging with a muscular new sound. This new e.p. contains two expansive tracks, the second being a remix. As always,

killer stuff. (LD)
(www.hydrahead.com)

PHILISTINES
"On Something" CD
The latest incarnation of ex-SEX PISTOL and RICK KID Glen Matlock. What you do get is 12 Matlock penned numbers. He sings too, and its actually decent stuff. Keyboard-drenched power pop / rock. Ironically, it reminds me a lot of the PROFESSIONALS. EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS wouldn't be a million miles away either. (RK)
(Majestic Recordings / www.mridistribution.com)

PICASTRO
"Metal Cares" CD
Toronto based PICASTRO is fronted by a songwriter whose learned to sign as her first language. The moody, landscape-like songs she's crafted here are a kind of drugged-out CAT POWER. Other comparisons have been made to the DIRTY THREE, but I think it's her haunting voice that carries the band. (LD)
(www.polyvinylrecords.com)

POINTED STICKS
"Perfect Youth" CD
The only album from these Canadian power-pop(ers) gets a welcome re-release 25 years later - now with four bonus tracks. What a treasure. While criminally unknown outside of Canada, in their day (1978-81) they were courted by Stiff (who went belly-up before releasing this classic) and are certainly up there with anything the VAPORS / JAGS / CARS / STARJETS / KNACK and bands of that ilk were capable of. Most famous to punkers, of course, POINTED STICKS got Dimwit from the (Canadian) SUBHUMANS after they split. Get it know. (RK)
(Sudden Death Records / www.suddendeath.com)

THE POSIES
"Every Kind Of Light" CD
The POSIES are back and in their time off they seem to have been listening to a lot of SEALS AND CROFT and PABLO CRUISE! Don't worry, you rockers, because there are a few real hip shakers on this also. The band seems to be energized and highly creative. All in all a very welcome return as far as I am concerned. (JC)
(Rykodisc.com)

POST STARDOM DEPRESSION
"Prime Time Looks a Lot Like Amateur Night" CD
Well, you can dress a pig up in a sequin gown, but in the end, it's still a pig. That's pretty much how I feel about this record. Super nice packaging, but when you peel back the disguise, it's just another drunken party band. (LD)
(www.controlgroupco.com)

PRIDE KILLS
"Deep In The Heart Of Texas" CD
Don't mess with Texas is fucking right. This album here is like the redneck you meet at the roadside bar on tour: hot, pissed, violent, and doesn't give a fuck. This is some nasty shit right here; imagine if PANTERA and MADBALL got together to cover some HATEBREED tunes at some dive hick bar with chickenwire around the stage. Good stuff if you like your hardcore tough as a wild bronc and angry as rattlesnake on a highway. (STM)
(www.thorprecords.com)

RAMBO
"Bring It" CD
A revered bunch of hardcore punks deliver 19 blazing tracks of politico and sociopolitical hardcore punk, and include a DVD of footage from their outrageous live shows. If you love the crust and worry for the world, you will most definitely want to own this album. (STM)
(www.havocrex.com)

THE REFLECTION
"Heaventown" CD
This band looks good alongside other current classic rock throwbacks. Slide them into the roster somewhere near the VON BONDIES. Rock'n'roll tune for the bar crowd with a heart. Yes, they are whiskey-soaked, but they still manage a fun, tight record. (LD)
(www.commonwall.com)

RIFU
"Dead End Street" CD
Norwegian HC / punk band. They take PROPAGANDHI's uncompromising political stance and relay it over a mixture of 90s new school hardcore, and melodic punk. Not quite as catchy as early RANDY, but stirring stuff nonetheless. (RK)
(Go Kart Records / www.gokartrecords.com)

RILO KILEY
"More Adventurous" CD
Even with two former child actors in their ranks, this L.A. quartet (recently signed to Warner) never felt like Hollywood ex-pats. Their perfect blend of darling alt-country sounded simultaneously effortless and spunky, as if they'd spent years sipping from a Saddle Creek. But on this album, for the first time, you get the sense that the band's time in the country is no more than a memory. Sure, a handful of the narratives are heart-wrenching tales of rural despair and disillusionment, but they're presented here as though the band took a lot of longing looks at the world outside and came in to write about what the city might look like if it slowed down a little. In doing so, Jenny Lewis' lush tales of love and lust (found and lost) find their perfect pitch, regardless of what genre the band opts to perform them through. More than a few moments of "More Adventurous" are performed with the kind of effortless brilliance that's vital to any excellent indie rock record. And while Rilo Kiley come just a couple of tracks short of that here, not even their not-so-subtle attempt at crossover success could derail their destiny. (TS)
(Brute / Beaute / www.brutebeaute.com)

RORY BREAKER
"The Peep Show" CD
8 tracks of energized, self-produced, self-released pop-punk, with the emphasis on rock. Not quite up there with LAWRENCE ARMS or ALKALINE TRIO, but anxiously heading in that direction. (RK)
(www.rorybreaker.com)

ROSEMARY'S BABIES
"Talking to the Dead" CD
This is punk as it's supposed to be...manic, relentless, idiotic and with a mean average of a minute-and-a-half per song. Prior to joining SAMHAIN and DANZIG, Eerie Von was drumming in this 80s hardcore unit that reflects everything from THE MISFITS to DEAD KENNEDYS to DRI to ADRENALIN OD. Songs like "I Vote Yes," "You Just Don't Rate" or "Becky Bondage" take the same fuzzbombed miniscule chord structuring of THE MISFITS, while songs like "I'm Gonna Be Sick," "Let's Molest" and "Sounds of Death" are paler shades of but no less monstrous than DEAD KENNEDYS ala the "Plastic Surgery Disasters" days. Vocalist J.R. frequently sounds like a sickly Jello Biafra, which makes it as comedic as the chuckles he closes many of the songs with. Regardless, he's a potent frontman who keeps these songs cheeky and fun. Featuring five live tracks from 1983, "Talking to the Dead" is a great slab of old school punk that comes at high recommendation. While ROSEMARY'S BABIES might not be one of the most critical bands of the lost punk era of the eighties, it's a hell of a reminder of how fucking cool punk used to be before it became a commodity. (RVH) (www.ghastlyrecords.com)

SCARY KIDS SCARING KIDS
"The City Sleeps in Flames" CD
Here we have yet another band signed to a major label, that sounds pretty much like every other band that has signed to a major label. The best way to describe this band is SENSES FAIL meets THURSDAY. It's got all the pops, hooks, and screams to make this one a big seller. Get the gold records ready, here comes SCARY KIDS SCARING KIDS! (MWB)
(www.immortalrecords.com)

SCARY KIDS SCARING KIDS
"The City Sleeps In Flames" CD
I wish I was asleep in flames listening to this. (STM)
(www.immortalrecords.com)

SECRET LIVES OF THE FREEMASONS
"This Was Built to Make You Dance" CD



This is one of the most accomplished new releases to come out of the emo / hardcore world in a while. A band from North Carolina takes us to school on melody with teeth like shards of glass and more guitars than a prog band. Really good. (LD)
(www.astromagnetics.com)

SELF AGAINST CITY
"Take It How You Want It" CDEP
The first band signed to Drive-Thru's new subsidiary also flashes the most potential of their young brothers-in-arms on this six-song release. Certainly not unlike a number of our nation's other emo-influenced upstarts, these youngbloods do, however, show a knack for writing solid pop-driven songs in the vein of SOMETHING CORPORATE. There's no piano here, just that endearing juvenile approach (not to be confused with the whiny, overly derivative one) that's so become our guilty pleasure before. One day SAC might start stealing girls' hearts on MTV2, and while this EP isn't a breakthrough, it shows they have enough to build on to make this it worth holding onto. (TS)
(Rushmore / www.rushmorerecords.com)

SHANGHAI VALENTINE
self-titled EP
LABELS TAKE NOTE: SIGN THIS BAND. This is the self-released, debut EP from SHANGHAI VALENTINE, a band that's quickly created a lot of buzz in the Massachusetts scene, and prove on this release that all that buzz is deserved. Playing a brand of hardcore punk best described as STRIKE ANYWHERE meets THE MISFITS, these guys are truly doing something different. This EP showcases five fast, powerful songs with amazing melodies. With musicianship that shows they know what they're doing, and strong vocals to push their sound to the

next level, expect to hear from these guys in the future. Seriously labels, it's worth your time, I swear – check 'em out. You've got my word on it. They're worth your time. (MWB)
(www.shanghaivalentine.net /)

SHERWOOD
"Sing, But Keep Going" CD
Though the cover art and concept had me foaming at the mouth with anticipation, the songs did not quite live up to my hopes on this debut from San Luis Obispo. I'll admit it's catchy and the melodies are there, but I expected a little more depth and expansiveness from a band who quotes Saint Augustine. Not bad, though. (LD)
(www.sherwoodmusic.net)

SHIVER
"Last Rides Of The Midway" CD
It sounds like PENNYWISE. That's about it. Nothing special. It was mastered by Bill Stevenson. I guess that's cool. (STM)
(www.da-core.com)

SHIVER
"Last Rides of the Midway" CD
Four dudes from Pennsylvania, playing hardcore punk rock the way it should be played. Sounds like these guys grew up wearing out their GOOD RIDDANCE CDs. It's a damn good recording, too, but that's what we've come to expect when it's mastered by Bill Stevenson at The Blasting Room. Fast, energetic, powerful punk rock in the vein of GOOD RIDDANCE mixed with AVAIL, with vocals that lean more towards Tim than Russ. Definitely worth checking out. (MWB)
(www.da-core.com)

THE SHOOK
"Oilville" CDEP
Metallic rock that owes a lot to bands like TOOL and SOUNDGARDEN. This 6 song release is pretty cool, but ultimately doesn't really break past their influences enough for me to be able to recommend it. Maybe down the line some, there will be potential. (JC)
(www.theshook.com)

SHOOK ONES
"Sixteen" CD
It's funny that this is called "Sixteen", as it will probably be sixteen year olds who eat this up. That's not a dis, but it's so upbeat and sentimental and simple that I've gotta think the pubescent and confused contingent is the intended demographic. Don't get me wrong, it's really good and will bring wide smiles to all the Dan Yemin disciples as well as your average JAWBREAKER and / or NEW FOUND GLORY and / or old H20 fan. Anyone remember Nine Lives from the Creepy Crawl comp? Anyhow, this is most def highly recommended if the catchy melodic hardcore is your bag. (STM)
(www.endwelletc.com)

SKARE TACTIC / COMIN' CORRECT
split CD
Old school heads kick old school jams. Classic hardcore delivered by those who know how to do it right. While this may be lost on the mindless young uns, those who truly love the core will eat this thing up for what it is rather than what it sells. Hardcore the way it was done when it meant something. CC kicks down CROMAG and YOT covers for good measure. (STM)

S.L.A.
"Sonic Love Affair" CD
Oh man, this is the good stuff. Trashy and fearless garage punk that has burning up my CD player with all of the times I have hit replay. Tracks like "Panther Piss," "100 watts (of Electric Love)" and "Junkyard Heart" totally rocked my world and they even throw in a great snotty cover of a Dylan classic. Highly recommended. (JC)
(Dollar Record Records / 32 Rausch St. #401 / San Francisco, CA 94103)

SLOPPY MEATEATERS
"Conditioned By The Laugh Act" CD



Third full-length from this on again, off again act. They've eschewed the BLINK 182 / SCREECHING WEASEL pop-punk sound, for a mature, sprawling eclectic rock sound. Good to seem 'em take a bit of politics to the indie-kids. Can't say I'm sold on the music, but its definitely hip Warped Tour Material... (RK)
(Orange Peal / www.orangepeal.com)

SMALL TOWNS BURN A LITTLE SLOWER
"Morality As Home Entertainment" CD
Over recent years, band names have been getting longer and longer, more vague, and more inane. I think, for the most part, we've all sat back and just accepted it as the way it is. But I'm hear to say I've had enough – because this one just pushed it a bit too far! Seriously – it's just too long, too bizarre, and just makes absolutely no sense. C'mon now guys – SMALL TOWNS BURN A LITTLE SLOWER – are you serious? Is this a fact? Do you know this is the case? Have you burned, say a large town, and timed it and compared this to a small town? I'm truly interested in knowing the facts! Oh, and the band itself – they're doing the thing that the kids like. File with: ANBERLIN, THE RECEIVING END OF SIRENS, UNDEROATH, et all. (MWB)
(www.triplecrownrecords.com)

SNAKE EYES
demo 2005 CD
Supergroups and ex-members tags hold very little water with me, but seriously, check the resume on this new band: members of Carry On, Terror, Internal Affairs, and Donnybrook. That there is some shit, boy. And guess what- the music is just as fucking awesome as you would expect. Pure hardcore in all its sweaty, bloody, pissed, obnoxious, violent, and hopeful glory brought to you by a bunch of motherfucker who know how to do it right. I don't need to even boost this band or this demo because in no time this band is gonna be everyone's favorite T-shirt. Seriously, get the demo now before you have to sell your car to get it off EBAY because this band is the shit! Recommended for: PEOPLE WHO LOVE THE FUCKING CORE, DORK! 1917 Rex does it again. (STM)
(www.1917records.com)

SOILENT GREEN
"Confrontation" CD
The kings of Southern fried grind brutality have returned to rattle the bones of the weak. The world doesn't deserve a band so good. Flesh eating grind, bone crunching breakdowns, brain melting groove, and enough sludge to drowned a village. Cross-pollinate your KYUSS with some PANTERA, feed it some angel dust in a dark Nawlins swamp and make it cover GODFLESH covering SKYNARD. That's this album right here and you'd be a fool to ignore it. (STM)
(www.relapserecords.com)

SOME GIRLS
"The DNA Will Have It's Say" CD
I love SG, so let me just get the nastiness out of the way: This album is roughly eight minutes long. What the fuck, boys? Have we learned nothing from SPAZZ? If your songs are going to be thirty seconds long, there should be at least fifty of them on a CD. Now, with that out of the way, I can gush on how great this is. Do you like grindcore but get sick of all the dirt and grime and shitty distortion and shittier production? This is the answer to your dilemma! Do you wonder what it would be like to smush your GANG OF FOUR and DYSTOPIA together and then have lyrics written by a fellow who has long since established himself as the one of the premier wordsmiths in modern music, punk or otherwise? This is exactly what you are looking for. The simple description would be STOOGES played by SLAYER, or maybe NEUROSIS on meth, but this band combines so many different influences that any description, simple or otherwise, would be an exercise in futility. Noisy and arty and reckless and flawless. Fans of BORN AGAINST, ENEWETAK, SWANS, FILTH, FANTOMAS, HIS HERO IS GONE, JENNY PICCOLO, oh Christ, I could do this all day. Great stuff by a great band. Oh, did I mention this is a supergroup? Don't need to. (STM)
(www.somegirlshaveallthefuck.com)



THE SOUND OF ANIMALS FIGHTING
"Tiger and the Duke" CD
By now you've surely heard of this, uh, animal collective of more than a dozen band members masquerading as beasts in the interest of some new and exciting creative collaboration. But what the heck does it sound like? Well, the answer's only partly to be found on this record, itself only a slight extension of their initial demos. We're treated to some ace vocal work, courtesy of CIRCA SURVIVE's Anthony Green, whose urgent squeals invoke illusions of what Josh Homme might sound like after swallowing helium. The guitars, too, are capable, and much effort is made to create an elaborate, interwoven album. Yeah, yeah – it's all a rich tapestry. But with a framework so frail – there are more interludes than songs – there's just not a lot to hang 15 hats on. That said, it's also encouraging enough to make us interested in round two. (TS)
(Stars & Satellites / www.thesoundofanimalsfighting.com)

SOUTHERN WAY
"V-Virus" CD
Dutch psychobilly debut. Yknow, NEKROMANTIX, METEORS, that kind of stuff. Not my thing, but some folks

like it apparently. Lyrics run the gamut of beer, football, girls, and horror films. (RK)
(Rebellion Records / www.rebellionrecords.nl)

THE SOVIETTES
"LP III"
Third full length, as one might deduce from the title (no shit!), and the first on Fat. It continues the catchy pop-punk with bollocks (almost) all girl thang in grand style. Think the GO-GOs kickstarted into a punk band, with multiple vocalists, and a healthy injection of cojones. Quite superb. (RK)
(Fat Wreck Chords / www.fatwreck.com)

SPITALFIELD
"Stop Doing Bad Things" CD
The best band in Chicago carries on in the tradition of their Windy City forefathers with their second major release. Like on 2003's Remember Right Now, every track here is a big winner, absolutely brimming with charisma and played with road-tested resolve. That incredible melodic sensibility's still in there, only now it's been layered in loving harmonies and lush guitar orchestrations. Whether or not frontman Mark Rose is progressing toward pin-up status [which he most certainly should be] isn't the issue. His lyrics [and those penned by bassist T.J. Minnich] have matured without abandoning the earnestness that so endeared them to us, and set to the soundtrack the band lays down here, they're right up there with the best of BRAID. Up against what passes for credible emo these days, not to mention the overwhelming abundance of commercial screamo acts, this record absolutely shines. Two widely available albums into their career, Spitalfield still haven't written a bad song and that's something few bands of the past fifteen years can boast. These boys needn't worry about breaking any bad habits. They never had any to begin with. (TS)
(Victory / www.victoryrecords.com)



STAMEN & PISTILS
"End of the Sweet Parade" CD
This three-piece band of troubadours seems to be influenced by NINE INCH NAILS & NICK CAVE. They sing torch songs with lots of electronic beats behind them. It's a bit disjointed & not too melodic, so I'm giving it a thumbs down. (LD)
(www.echelonproductions.com)

STATISTICS
"Often Lie" CD
DESAPARECIDOS guitarist Denver Dalley brings his one-man show back for a second go 'round on this stirring sophomore disc. Similar in spirit to 2004's Leave Your Name, Dalley avoids the vocoder here and harnesses his eclectic electronic sensibilities, instead honing in on loving guitar tones that carry these nine tracks. With his breathy vocals coming through soft and clean we're treated to a songwriting talent that deserves to be blasted through city squares on sunny afternoons. Twenty years ago, Dalley might've been one of the most appreciated songsmiths of the mid-80s; as it is, his intimately nostalgic recordings are reason enough to make any trip to the record store a satisfying one. (TS)
(Jade Tree / www.jadetree.com)

STOCKYARD STOICS
self-titled CD
Spirited debut 14 tracker from ex-members of LEFTOVER CRACK, MDC, F-MINUS and the DETONATORS. They turn in an exuberant slice of 'street-punk'. Reminds me a lot of early(ish) RANCID and the SWINGIN UTTERS (minus the Celtic stuff), and cite their biggest influences as STIFF LITTLE FINGERS and the CLASH, which should come as no surprise. They throw in the odd reggae track, but largely keep it up-tempo, with some suitably blistering lefty lyrics. Great stuff. (RK)
(Sudden Death Records / www.suddendeath.com)

THE STRANGLERS
"Live 78, SF" DVD
Another choice nugget from the Target video vaults. It's not very meaty: there are only seven tracks, no real bonus features to speak of (the usual Target promo) and the quality is a bit murky, but fuck, this is the STRANGLERS in 1978; come on, you've got to check it out. (JC)
(MVD)

STRAY FROM THE PATH
"Our Oceania" CD
A brilliant album that melds the technical velocity of DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN with the haunting artsy savvy of RADIOHEAD. The problem is that there is no soul whatsoever. All head, no heart. Good stuff if you want flesh with no bones (or the bones with no flesh?). Whichever. It's the metalcore equivalent of an art school sophomore. (STM)
(www.fivepointrecords.com)

STRAY FROM THE PATH
"Our Oceania" CD
Eleven songs of chugga chugga metal. Not that this is a bad thing, but I'm just tired of hearing the same sound over and over. It doesn't get the publicity or take the grief that that screamo crap does, but it's seriously just as overdone. Think early DEP, before they got all technical and amazing, just when they were pretty good – that's the sound that these guys are shooting for. Nothing that's gonna break new ground here. (MWB)
(www.fivepointrecords.com)

STRYPER
"Reborn" CD
Yes, that Stryper. I can't do this. How do you clown Stryper? Maybe in the 80s, I could have made some smart-ass comment about this stupid band, but really, making fun of them now would be like raping a three-legged puppy. The drummer of First Blood has a Stryper tattoo. Overcast and nachos, dude. (STM)
(www.big3records.com)

SUNDAYRUNNERS
self-titled CD
If it weren't for the Midwest, all of the sad motherfuckers in this country might have to move to Seattle. And since a.) the left seaboard's already overstuffed enough without more of you crackers coming west, and b.) the strips of big-boxed earth and urban sprawl aren't falling into Lake Michigan any time soon, it's a fine thing we have Chicago's Sundayrunners to cheer us up. Started as a solo project of sorts for main man Randy Diderrich, this fleshed-out debut shows some encouraging evolutionary aspects, melding adult pop numbers with a wry wit that incites full-on chuckles. Imagine THE FLAMING LIPS weaned on BUDDY HOLLY and THE BEATLES. Already having appeared on the O.C., and soon to grace your cardigan-wearing older brother's mixtapes, this delightful quartet might still be squinty-eyed from the spotlight – but expect that to change soon. (TS)
(Machine / www.machine-inc.com)

PATRIK TANNER
"Soft" CD
You can hear his love of American pop music pouring from this CD. I sense similarities to BEULAH and other indie acts who focus on melody and hooks. There's even some Americana here, ironically played by a Swedish ex-patriot. (LD)
(www.patriktanner.com)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET
"Total" CD
TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET were already a pretty rad band, then they got Kody from the LILLINGTONS. Now they are total hot shit! Wyoming never rocked this hard before. Doesn't have as much of the great Sc-fi themes as the LILLINGTONS did, but still plenty of doomed romance and 1,2, F,U, punk rock. (JC)
(www.redscare.net)

TEENAGE CASKET COMPANY
"Dial It Up" CD
Brit debut long one. What you get is a surprisingly sound disc of hard rock and power pop. they execute the glam and melody just right, without losing any of the bollocks. They remind me a lot of the beset moments of AMERICAN HEARTBREAK and the FLEXAPLEASERS. Well worth checking out. (RK)
(Trashpit Records / www.trashpit.co.uk)

TEENAGE FANCLUB
"Man Made" CD
This is a really great CD. Honestly, I hadn't paid too much attention to TEENAGE FANCLUB before. I always liked what I heard, but never followed up and picked up any of the record. This is seeming like quite a mistake right about now. I've been playing the hell out of this CD and it just keeps getting better. Lots of well crafted songs that bring to mind the best of the gentler stuff (rich Byrds like harmonies, dreamy productions, a scandalous hint of '70s soft rock...) while still having a rock and roll edge. This is definitely a highly recommended disc. (JC)
(Merge / P.O. Box 1235 Chapel Hill, NC 27514)

TERMINAL
"How The Lonely Keep" CD
TERMINAL, huh? Well if bands like this keep getting signed and blowing up like they have been, it's the underground music scene that is terminal. Radio rock pop crap that is passed off as being punk rock because they've got belt buckles, shaggy hair, and they're wearing hoodies. They produce nothing I haven't already heard from RECOVER. Give me a break...enough's enough guys! DEMAND SOMETHING NEW! TAKE BACK THE SCENE! And with that I'll get off my soapbox. (MWB)
(www.toothandnail.com)

THE NUMBER TWELVE LOOKS LIKE YOU
"Nuclear. Sad. Nuclear" CD
Somewhere, the nerdy Weezer camp and the complicated Dillinger Escape Plan camp crashed head on and gave us what could be considered "nerd chic metalcore". Hello, CURL UP AND DIE. Hello,

SOUNDSCAPE MUSIC REVIEWS

DAUGHTERS. Hello, THE NUMBER TWELVE LOOKS LIKE YOU. It's good if you like scary music that isn't scary at all. (STM)
(www.eyeballrecords.com)

THETA
"Tone Poems for Sad Times" CD
With dueling electric guitars and a strong pop backbeat, THETA have created a nice midwestern indie hit. Beyond their home of Kansas, this band hasn't received too much attention, but the fact that they have this strong e.p. of indie-rock with a nod to the 80's is sure to give them a push. (LD)
(www.translationloss.com)

THINKING ALOUD
"REMOTE MIND CONTROL" CD
Wow. Kinda experimental glam-punk rock, but honestly I can't compare them to anyone. This is something unlike anything I've heard before. That doesn't mean they're the first band to do it – it means I've never heard anything like this before. I like this a lot. It'll get your ass dancing. And my ass never dances, so what does that tell you? (MWB)
(www.low-rentrecords.com)

THIS IS HELL
self-titled CD
AMERICAN NIGHTMARE is one of my favorite bands and apparently, this sentiment is shared by TIH because this thing sounds just like "Background Music". There's nothing wrong with that per se, but everyone bites AN these days, and this things only saving grace is that they do it so well that you can appreciate it for itself and not as a copycat (something you can't do with many bands these days). So I'm enjoying this thing when I realize that it sounds like something else too, something really good, and then it hits me: TRIPFACE! I love TRIPFACE! So now I'm listening to TRIPFACE covering "Background Music" and this is all fucking good. And then I realize: I don't care who they sound like, they sound 110% better than 110% of all the garbage that's out there these days.



And then I realize: this may be one of the best albums this year! How could it not be? It sounds like TRIPFACE covering "Background Music". And then Daryl Palumbo shows up to do a vox cameo and that's funny because he's in GLASSJAW with one of the TRIPFACE dudes. Now I've got a headache. And then I realize that the last song is a 108 cover. It's just too much! Look, bitches, this thing is great and you need to go buy it right fucking now and stop being posi little dorks who think hardcore is all message boards and expensive shoes. (STM)
(www.stateofmindrecordings.com)

TIDES
"Resurface" CD
Here's a kickass new CD of instru-metal, my new favorite genre. Listen up, if you are a fan of PELICAN, CAVE IN & KINSKI, you must check this out. Each song is an epic and seems to tell a story without words. This is highly recommended moody intense shit! (LD)
(www.tbdrecords.com)

MARY TIMONY
"Ex Hex" CD



Who could forget the great 90's band HELIUM? With all Ms. Timony's experience with writing slanted post-rock songs, it's no wonder that this third solo album is this interesting. Winks to FUGAZI; this one's produced by Brendan Canty. Really good. (LD)
(www.lookoutrecords.com)

TO KILL
"Watching You Fall" CD
It used to be that Catalyst only signed vegan straight edge bands and would kick sellouts off their rosters, so I am going to go ahead and assume that these dudes right here are vegan straight edge (yep, I'm right. I see now in the liner notes that they all thank the vegan straight edge). I am also gonna say that they are pretty sweet. Old school hardcore with just enough metallic tinges to get your blood pumping, this Italian band brigs the mosh and the message better than most of their more popular American peers. (STM)

TOURMALINE
"Strange Distress Calls" CD
These guys play some seriously addictive pop-indie rock with moog. Think THE ANNIVERSARY meets ARMOR FOR SLEEP, with a touch of HEY MERCEDES. Those are three really talented bands, and so is TOURMALINE. Very strong vocals lay perfectly over impeccably played melodies, with plenty of hooks to keep it interesting. They mix a lot of different songs on here, too; some more upbeat, some more mellow, but they're all catchy as hell. These guys have way more in common with the music of 1999 than 2005, and that's not a bad thing. (MWB)
(www.nomilkrecords.com)

TROUBLED HUBBLE
"Making Beds in a Burning House" CD
TROUBBLED HUBBLE is like a fruit salad of BUILT TO SPILL, BEN FOLDS & THE WEAKERTHANS. It's yummy indie pop, well written with about a million hooks. This is the kind of pop music that is hard to resist so why bother. Go get this! (LD)
(www.lookoutrecords.com)

TROPHY
"Made Out of Babies" CD
Considering the humongous fan base that Neurot Recordings has, I don't think this record is going to have too tough a time finding its audience. The catch here is that the hellish, gut wrenching vocals are done by a female singer. Think a more metal BABES IN TOYLAND. (LD)
(www.neurotrecordings.com)

TSUNAMI BOMB
"Live at the Glass House" DVD
TSUNAMI BOMB are the latest to be featured in Kung Fu Films' successful DVD series, The Show Must Go Off! Seriously, what a great idea this has been – putting some of today's top acts on DVD and selling them at a reasonable price – that's awesome. TB joins the ranks of ONE MAN ARMY, ALKALINE TRIO, and THE CIRCLE JERKS to have this high honor bestowed upon them. Anyone who has ever seen TB live know that it's an amazing, energetic show, and it's truly plays out that way on DVD live, too. Kung Fu has done a great job of choosing bands that truly give it all live. Stocked with extra features and even a music video, this DVD has got it all. The sound quality isn't the best I've heard, but hey, what can you do? (MWB)
(www.kungfurecords.com)

ULVER
"Blood Inside" CD
Is there anything more pretentious than electronic indie music? Seriously, it's even more pretentious than THE KILLERS and THE BRAVERY, and that's saying something. They call themselves "experimental" – fuck that. Everything from the layout, to the paper stock chosen for the booklet, the lyrics, and obviously the music itself – it just wreaks of arrogance. So if you're into electronic snobbery from Norway, pick this one up! (MWB)
(www.theendrecords.com)

UME
"Urgent Sea" CD
At first, I thought I hated this, but then I started to really love it – much like the first time I heard PJ HARVEY. They have that gritty rock sound that makes you know they're from the underground where everything is cooler and more intense. It's cathartic, harsh & wonderful. (LD)
(www.prettyactivity.com)

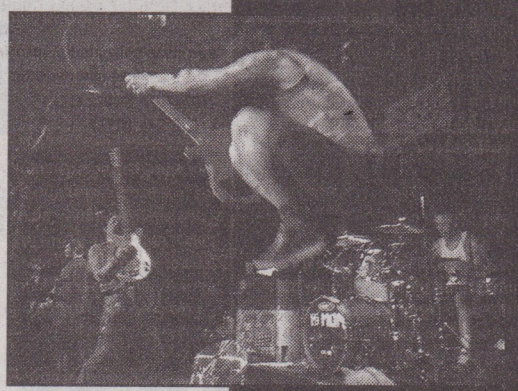
UPTOWN CREEPERS
"What They Want" CD EP
Debut 7 track. This mixes up ska (lots of horns) with a fair bit of RANCID style punk. And a dash of raw rock n roll too. Certainly makes for an interesting mix, though it doesn't quite gel together. Next record might be a cracker, though. (RK)
(www.uptowncreepers.com)

THE VALLEY ARENA
"Take Comfort In Strangers" CD
It takes about three seconds of "Paint It Red," the first single and video from Long Beach's Valley Arena, for the realization to hit you square in the face, the ears and the heart. This is so good it's almost unbelievable. That immediacy makes its way through most of Take Comfort In Strangers, but this band is hardly limited to that. Every track marries urgent, angular guitar work with one of the most inspired rhythm sections to debut in some time. Lyrically, Warren Woodward caustic calls-to-arms are the kind your stereo spits out all too infrequently. Imagine THURSDAY without the hardcore influence [fitting since this disc is the first release from Geoff Rickly's new label] and you've got a good reference point. But even then, you likely won't be prepared for what these strangers have in store. Poised to be the new poster boys of post-punk and post-rock, this is 2005's best new band. Don't miss the boat on this one. (TS)
(Astro Magnetics / www.astromagnetics.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Anti-State: Anarcho-Punk Compilation Volume 2" CD
The second (mandatory) installment of UK anarcho-punk, culled from the glory days of 78-86 or so. As with the first volume, "Anti-War", you get 21 bands, 21 tracks of the famous, not so famous, cruelly forgotten and more than a couple of hidden gems. AMEBIX, MOB, FLUX OF PINK INDIANS, SUBHUMANS, POISON GIRLS, FAMOUS IMPOSTERS, CHUMBAWAMBA, POLEMIC, DECADENCE WITHIN, TOXIC WASTE, TOXI EPHEX ad more. This volume has a lot more tracks culled from original demos - giving it much more of a (lo-fi) feel of what it was like discovering this stuff for the first time. Quite superb. (RK)
(Overground / www.overgroundrecords.co.uk)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Brabantia Nostra" CD
Dutch Oi / streetpunk compilation from bands from the south of Holland. Most are pretty crap, it has to be said. DISCIPLINE are decent, and BADLANDS do the pop end ok. But I can't think of much good to say about the likes of RAZORBLADE, KNOCKDOWN, TECH 9, SOUTHERN WAY, GECKO BROTHERS, OFF SIDE or the MIGHTY DOGS. And their lyrics are all almost uniformly embarrassingly retarded. Apparently they are all the world's hardest street-fighters, drunkest bootboys, and greatest conquerors of the female sex. Holland sounds like a swell place. (RK)
(Rebellion Records / www.rebellionrecords.nl)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Dead Bands Party – A Tribute to Oingo Boingo" CD
What we have here is a whole lot of bands using synth and ska to compile a tribute to the 80s band OINGO BOINGO. I'm not so sure that they, of all bands, truly deserve a tribute. They were average at best, even in the scope of the 80s scene, but hey, whatever. You've got bands like THE MATCHES, RX BANDITS, HELLOGOODBYE, PLAIN WHITE T's, OVER IT, and FINCH, so you know it's got the star power to sell...I'm just not sold on the fact that it's worth buying. (MWB)
(www.indiandolarecords.com)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"The Estrus Kamikaze Ass Chomp n' Stomp CD Sampler Vol. 4" CD
If your familiar with the fabulous Estrus record label, than you will know the tasty stew that these samplers serve up. For those uninitiated, you can expect some straight forward garage, some heavy heavy rock, some more trashed out garage and an occasional band like THE DIPLOMATS OF SOLID SOUND, who deliver a soul rock blend that sounds like the second coming of BOOKER T AND THE MGS. You get the MUMMIES, BOBBYTEENS, MONO MEN, VON ZIPPERS MAKERS, etc. etc. what more do you need? (JC)
(Estrus / P.O. Box 2125 / Bellingham, WA 98227)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Gangsters Galore" CD
Half a dozen Japanese 'street' and rock n roll bands, er, tear it up. I'm a little disappointed. Usually when the Japanese take a genre to heart, they excel. On this effort, the JOHNNY BOYS, GOLDEN YEARS, FLAPPER, BONNIE LIMOUSINE, STINK GASPERS and the STRUMMERS are pretty ordinary. (RK)
(Real Life Recordings / www.straightup-rec.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Hurley #2 (the Voice Of Youth) Record Collection Sampler 2004" CD
15 track label sampler with tunes ranging from the sublime – Kate Earl, MT. EGYPT, John Frusciante- to the ridiculous – HAR MAR SUPERSTAR, MEANS RED. Some real nice stuff on here and a few tracks that just kind of annoyed me. (JC)
(recordcollectionmusic.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Lords Of Dogtown, Music From The Motion Picture" CD
Along the same lines as the DOGTOWN AND ZBOYS soundtrack, a fun collection of '70s rock with new tracks from SOCIAL DISTORTION (doing The CLASH's "Death Or Glory") and RISE AGAINST (covering BLACK FLAG's "Nervous Breakdown"), as well as SPARKLEHORSE's PINK FLOYD cover. Any CD with IGGY POP, BLACK SABBATH, DAVID BOWIE and SWEET is obviously worth picking up and the rest is just icing on the cake. (JC)
(Geffen)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Mister Comp 3" CD
When I was a kid, I used to go in to kitchen on a rainy day, throw a bunch of random ingredients in a bowl, stir it up and bake it into cookies. I called it a "mixture". This label seems to have the same idea for their compilation. The only unifying detail is that each band is from Boston. THE COMMON COLD, MAX LORD, NAPKINS, etc. (LD)
(www.misterrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Punkorama 10" CD & DVD
The latest Epitaph showcase, featuring the ever more diverse roster to full effect - punk, pop-rock, post-hardcore and hip-hop. Includes unreleased tracks from the OFFSPRING, NOFX, BAD RELIGION, THE MATCHES, DANGERDOOM, HOT WATER MUSIC, BOUNCING SOULS, SPECIAL GOODNESS, THE COUP, SCATTER THE ASHES, THIS IS ME SMILING and more. With a DVD with hits from YOUTH GROUP, WEAKERTHANS, DROPKICK MURPHYS, PULLEY and dozens more. A pretty hard-hitting package. Great sounds, something nice to watch, and a good price. Sounds like a deal. It is. (RK)
(Epitaph / www.epitaph.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Sunday Nights: The Songs of Junior Kimbrough" CD
Beginning with IGGY & THE STOOGES'S cover of the eerie song about rape "You Better Run," this compilation has me hooked. JUNIOR KIMBROUGH, one of our best blues musicians up until his death in 1998. This comp features all kinds of artists doing their best in tribute: SPIRITUALIZED, THE BLACK KEYS, THE FIERY FURNACES, PETE YORN & BLUES EXPLOSION. Listen to this to remind yourself what rock'n'roll is based on. (LD)
(www.fatpossum.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Takeover Records 3-Way Issue #2" CD
So this is the 2nd installment in the sexually-innuendo laced series entitled "3 Way" from Takeover Records. This time they've got THE MATCHES, NEAR MISS, and REEVER OLIVER. All three of these bands are making quite the name for themselves lately. First up is NEAR MISS, and after three songs it's on to REEVE OLIVER. Both play that pop rock nu-punk / mall punk / whatever. They do it well, though, and pull it off without a hitch. Lastly is Epitaph Records' THE MATCHES. These guys have been getting a lot of publicity over the past year or so, and honestly, I never saw what the big deal was. And while I still don't, I gotta say, the three songs on here truly push the limits of their sound, which is great. These three tracks remind me more of THE PIXIES and NADA SURF than any shitty pop-punk band, which is refreshing. While they're not to the level of those bands, obviously, it shows they've got the ability to write some pretty good songs. I hope they stick with this sound and see where it will take them. (MWB)
(www.takeoverrock.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"(UN)known" CD
The title of this CD is pretty ironic, given that the bands on this CD include DEAD POETIC, HALIFAX, HE IS LEGEND, BOYS NIGHT OUT, and BLEED THE DREAM. As far as I can tell, all those bands are pretty known. No need for the 'Un' in front of it. Yeah, it's great for bands that are trying to get their name out there to be featured with bands of this caliber, but all in all, it comes off as just another flavor-of-the-month-band compilation put out to move units. (MWB)
(www.doubleblindmusic.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Warped Tour 2005 Compilation" CD
I don't think you can really review a CD like this. Every year, you know it's coming, and you have a pretty good idea of the bands that are going to be on it. So I'll just give you a brief run-down on some of the bands, and you can probably guess by that if you want it or not, right? Then again, you're gonna buy it anyway because a) it's good, b) it's cheap, and c) everyone does. So yeah, here you go: DROPKICK MURPHYS, FALL OUT BOY, HOT WATER MUSIC, STREET DOGS, BOYS NIGHT OUT, THE UNSEEN, A WILHELM SCREAM, PENNYWISE, FLOGGING MOLLY, HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS, STRIKE ANYWHERE, BLEED THE DREAM, DEATH BY STEREO, TSUNAMI BOMB, and GYM CLASS HEROES. Ok, is that enough? Yeah, I figured. You're gonna go buy it. Just do it. (MWB)
(www.sideonedummy.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"What The Kids Want" CD
The title says it all, doesn't it? And they're right...this sampler of Tooth & Nail / Solid State bands is EXACTLY what the kid wants. Tight pop with hooks and screams. The bands featured are TERMINAL, WAKING ASHLAND, AS CITIES BURN, EAGER SEAS, and DISCOVER AMERICA. It's what the kids want! It sells! Is it what I want? No. (MWB)
(www.toothandnail.com)

VARUKERS
"Murder" CD
A new edition of this late 80s offering from the "poor man's DISCHARGE", together with the "Nothings Changed" EP. I'm sure fans of that early 80s Brit metallic thrash with horrible vocals, will be excited. (RK)
(Rodent Popsicle Records / www.rodentpopsicle.com)

SOUNDSCAPE MUSIC REVIEWS

SONNY VINCENT
"Soul Mates" CD
SONNY VINCENT ex of the TESTORS and SHOTGUN RATIONALE has definitely been around the block and then some. He is one of the rare breed of rock and roll survivors- Cheetah Chrome, Jeff Dahl, Nikki Sudden, Neil Hagerty, Falling James plus a couple more, that have made it through the crazy times and can still rip it up with the gusto of men half their age. This CD is good, really good, a dozen or so tracks that slash you right between your ear holes and leaves you begging for more. Check this CD out and hear how it's done right. (JC)
(angelfire.com / ny / punkrocknroll)

VMW
self-titled CD
Featuring members of THE OATH, HOLY MOLAR & CHARLES BRONSON, this group is one band of merry hipsters. The cover art seems to say "all hail cocaine," and their music suggests a speedy robotic love affair with electroclash. Perhaps this band would have really caused waves a couple of years ago, but I think they still have potential. (LD)
(www.coalition-records.com)

VOODOO GLOW SKULLS
"Adiccion, Tradicion, Revolucion" CD
VGS are back. New label, harder sound (even more punk with horns) and a lot more pissed and political. Lots of songs in Spanish and a couple of laidback Latin ska tracks for good measure. They're certainly past their prime in terms of popularity, but I suspect this is their best record to date...(RK)
(Victory Records / www.victoryrecords.com)

WHITE STRIPES
"Get Behind Me Satan" CD
Jack White has turned into the Ron Popiel of garage rock. On this new release, you not only get a healthy dose of the WHITE STRIPES that you already know and love, you get triangles, bells, marimbas, God, Satan, ghosts, psychoanalysis ("The Denial Twist," "Passive Manipulation"), reds, whites, blues, it slices it dices... there is at least one song ("My Doorbell") that sounds like an outtake from LED ZEPPELIN'S "In Through The Out Door" LP... and Meg sings lead on a track. In short, this album is chock full of stuff, some great, some misguided, but it's never boring and (you heard it here first) it will probably win at least one Grammy. This also has a swan song (not necessarily a LED ZEP reference) vibe to it; I don't know why, but after listening to this a few times I felt that this record seemed like a farewell. Maybe I'm just not sure where they could go from here. (JC)
(whitestripes.com)



THE WILLOWZ
"Talk In Circles" CD
These damn kids today, with their long hair and damned Rock and Roll music....Does your heart good to see it, doesn't it? I can't quite get a fix on this CD, it's not as straight garage as I remember their last release being. There is some of that, but they are kind of all over the map on this. I hear a lot of early Frank Black on this, a little STEREOLAB and some general freakiness. Whatever it is, it's good, it's never boring and you should check them out soon. (JC)
(sympathyrecords.com)

WIRE
"The Scottish Play: 2004" CD & DVD
14 tracks recorded live (their entire set)one day in April, 2004. In bonnie Glasgow. 10 new(er) ones and 4 gems from "Pink Flag". The new stuff sounds very much like their first album material, so I guess they've come full circle. It's live, but the years (nearly 30!) don't seem to have aged 'em too much! Great stuff that sounds, well, like WIRE. Jerky, all elbows and angles, fuzzed out, melodic, primal, stripped down punk. DVD is a 'film' of the same show, which technology forbades me commenting on...(RK)
(Pink Flag / www.pinkflag.com)

DENISON WITMER
"Are You a Dreamer?" CD
These are soft songs for quiet, peaceful & sensitive people. Reminds me of SUFJAN STEVENS in that Mr. Witmer has an ensemble of backup singers & instruments like flutes. It's a lovely record of dreamy little tunes. Very good! (LD)
(www.themilitiagroup.com)

X
"Live in Los Angeles" DVD + CD
In my opinion, X are not only one of the best punk bands of all time, but also one of the great rock and roll bands of all time. There were certainly great bands before them in the '70s, to me, though, they were that band that really fulfilled the promise of early rock and roll that flamed out in the late 1950s. I like to think that what X did was the natural progression that might have happened if Buddy Holly's plane hadn't crashed, if Eddie Cochran hadn't died in the car crash that also broke Gene Vincent. If Chuck Berry wasn't put in jail on trumped up charges and Jerry Lee Lewis didn't have a penchant for kissin' cousin' jailbait. X are rock and roll! They have a spirit that has yet to be broken, though many have tried. They are still running strong and in November of last year they played a couple live shows that you could bounce a quarter off of, which are thankfully contained in this new CD and DVD (separate releases). Both have 21 live tracks and the DVD has a couple of choice acoustic tracks that find John Doe and Exene in fine voice, and a cool little Billy Zoom feature. There isn't a dud on this. Listening to them all again, I'm still floored by how many great songs this band has produced. My only wish is that they would go ahead and do a new album already. I know they have it in them, John and Exene still write new material for all of their other projects, why can't we just get one more X record? For now we have these releases, which I couldn't recommend any higher. Hail, Hail, Rock and Roll! (JC)
(Shoutfactory.com)



YELLOW BELTS
"Crash Landers" CD EP
6 track debut. Full-out, balls to the wall high-octane rock n roll. Think LAZY COWGIRLS, ZEKE, SPEED-DEALER. You get the idea. Nothing special, but they do it well, with a stellar production, and plenty of snarl. (RK)
(Eugene Records / www.eugenerecords.com)

YELLOWCARD
"Where We Stand" CD
Re-release of an early YELLOWCARD CD, with an old singer and a better sound. More punk, less crap. Honestly, I didn't mind listening to this CD. I'd rather chew glass than listen to anything they do now, but this wasn't too bad. They should boot out their new singer and bring this guy back. It's also funny to see dudes who are now pretty "famous" looking like assholes in stupid dude-guy hats and long hair. That's probably worth the price of the CD alone. I bet this singer kicks himself in the ass every day for quitting this band and losing out on the fame and fortunes that comes with selling your soul to the music industry. But at least he still has his dignity and can listen to these CDs and not be embarrassed like I hope he is of their later trash. (MWB)
(www.takeoverrock.com)

YESTERDAY'S RING
"El Rancho"
There's something really perfect about French Canadians singing country songs. It's so wrong, it's right. This frenchy singer has got one of the best punk rock voices I've heard in a while, and he's using it to write heartfelt tributes to women, friends, and the most country subject ever, liquor. (LD)
(www.daretocarerecords.com)

ZZZZ
"Palm Reader" CD
This is the sound of childhood terror. It's the soundtrack to an evil carnival that harkens the thought,"Something wicked this way comes." But it is also a gypsy celebration of polka melodies, new-wave vocals & hipster leanings. Formed by members of SWEEP THE LEG JOHNNY. (LD)
(www.polyvinylrecords.com)



After fronting NYHC's most influential band SHEER TERROR, the Rev PAUL BEARER is back to give you a dance track to shake your ass over your misfortunes or waddle home with your misgivings.

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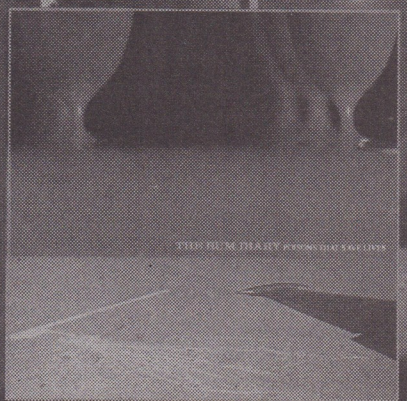
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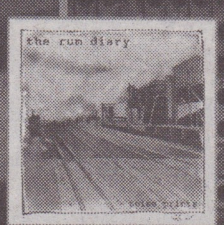
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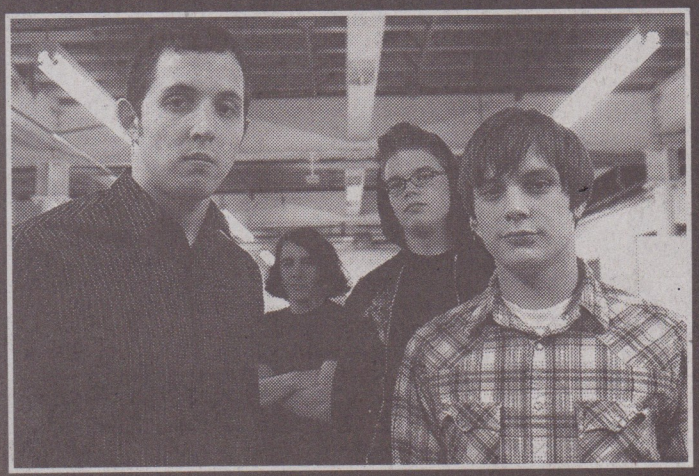
AMP MAGAZINE

SAMPLER

Volume 16 - Disc 1

If you like what you hear, check out the info below and go out and buy a record from the artists. Support the scene.





TRACK 1
BAND: JUST SURRENDER
SONG: "Tell Me Everything"
RECORD: If These Streets Could Talk
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Broken English
WEB: www.brokenenglish.net, www.just-surrender.met



TRACK 2
SONG: BEDLIGHTFORBLUEEYES
SONG: "Ephemeral Addictions"
RECORD: The Dawn
RELEASE DATE: 8/16/05
LABEL: Trustkill
WEB: www.bedlightforblueeyes.com, www.trustkill.com



TRACK 3
BAND: THE AQUABATS
SONG: "Fashion Zombies!"
RECORD: Charge!!
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Nitro Records
WEB: www.nitrorecords.com
www.theaquabats.com



TRACK 4
BAND: PLAIN WHITE T'S
SONG: "Take Me Away"
RECORD: All That We Needed
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Fearless Records
WEB: www.plainwhitets.com
www.fearlessrecords.com



TRACK 5
BAND: FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES
SONG: "Jack And Ginger"
RECORD: Abandon Your Friends
RELEASE DATE: 8/30/05
LABEL: Vagrant Records
WEB: www.fromautumntoashes.com



TRACK 6
BAND: THE BLACKOUT PACT
SONG: "We Drink So You Don't Have To"
RECORD: Hello Sailor
RELEASE DATE: 8/23/05
LABEL: Astro Magnetics
WEB: www.astromagnetics.com



TRACK 7
BAND: DOOMRIDERS
SONG: "Black Thunder"
RECORD: Black Thunder
RELEASE DATE: 8/9/05
LABEL: Deathwish, Inc.
WEB: www.deathwishinc.com



TRACK 8
BAND: SCARY KIDS SCARING KIDS
SONG: "The Only Medicine"
RECORD: The City Sleeps in Flames
RELEASE DATE: 6/28/05
LABEL: Immortal
WEB: www.scarykids.com



TRACK 9
BAND: THE BANNER
SONG: "Venom & Hope"
RECORD: Each Breath Haunted
RELEASE DATE: 8/16/05
LABEL: Ferret Music
WEB: www.ferretstyle.com
www.thebannernj.com



TRACK 10
BAND: NEW CRASH POSITION
SONG: "Rise"
RECORD: Music To Rob Banks To
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Handout Records
WEB: www.newcrashposition.com
www.purevolume.com/newcrashposition,
www.myspace.com/newcrashposition



TRACK 11
BAND: THE CREST
SONG: "Mr."
RECORD: Skeptik
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Uprising Records
WEB: www.uprisingrecords.com



TRACK 12
BAND: INKED IN BLOOD
SONG: "These Sonnets Of Our Lives"
RECORD: Lay Waste The Poets
RELEASE DATE: 10/11/05
WEB: www.facedownrecords.com
www.inkedinblood.net



TRACK 13
BAND: SECRET LIVES OF THE FREE MASONS
SONG: "It Only Took A Whisper"
RECORD: This Was Built to Make You Dance
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Astro Magnetics
WEB: www.secretlivesdanceparty.com



TRACK 14
BAND: BLACK SUNDAY
SONG: "Horror & Heartache"
RECORD: Caught Red Handed
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Self Released
WEB: www.blacksunday.tk
www.myspace.com/blacksundayrock



TRACK 15
BAND: THE ABSENCE
SONG: "Summon The Dark"
RECORD: From Your Grave
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Metal Blade Records
WEB: www.metalblade.com



TRACK 16
BAND: AGENTS OF MAN
SONG: "Can't Run"
RECORD: Count your Blessings
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Century Media Records
WEB: www. agentsofman.com, www.centurymedia.com



TRACK 17
BAND: EMERY
SONG: "Studying Politics"
RECORD: The Question
RELEASE DATE: 9/2/05
LABEL: Tooth & Nail Records
WEB: www.emerymusic.com



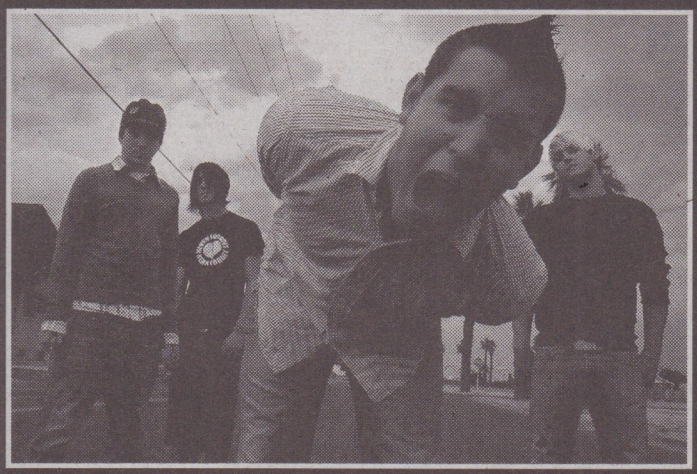
TRACK 18
BAND: TOMMY GUTLESS
SONG: "Working Class Heroes"
RECORD: Death, Honor, Or Glorybound
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Street Anthem Records
WEB: www.streetanthemrecords.com



TRACK 19
BAND: HAVOCHATE
SONG: "Fiction"
RECORD: Cycle Of Pain
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Indecent Media
WEB: www.havochate.net



TRACK 20
BAND: THE ACCUSED
SONG: "Fast Zombies Rule"
RECORD: Oh Martha!
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Condar Records
WEB: www.splatterrock.com



TRACK 21
BAND: A CHANGE OF PACE
SONG: "Loose Lips Sink Ships"
RECORD: An Offer You Can't Refuse
RELEASE DATE: 3/22/05
LABEL: Immortal Records
WEB: www.achangeofpacemusic.com



TRACK 22
BAND: THE SUICIDE MACHINES
SONG: "Ghosts On Sunset Blvd."
RECORD: War Profiteering Is Killing Us All
RELEASE DATE: 8/9/05
LABEL: Side One Dummy Records
WEB: www.sideonedummy.com

AMP MAGAZINE

SAMPLER

Volume 16 - Disc A

If you like what you hear, check out the info below and go out and buy a record from the artists. Support the scene.



TRACK 1
BAND: NO TRIGGER
SONG: "Earthtones"
RECORD: tba
RELEASE DATE: Early '06
LABEL: Nitro Records
WEB: www.nitrorecords.com



TRACK 2
BAND: A WILHELM SCREAM
SONG: "Me vs. Morrissey in the Pretentious Contest (The Ladder Match)"
RECORD: Ruiner
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Nitro Records
WEB: www.nitrorecords.com



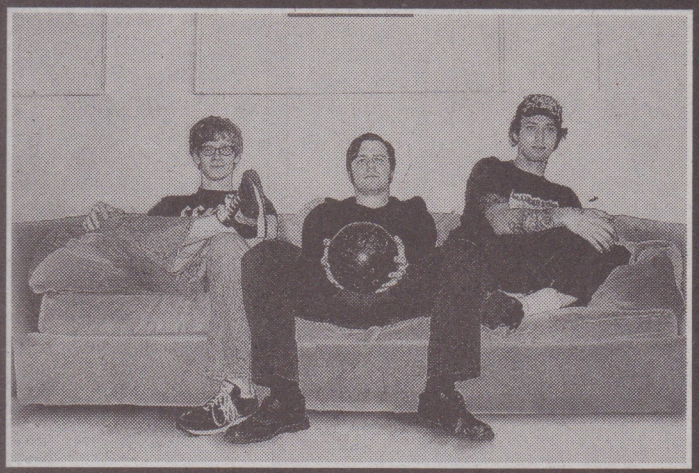
TRACK 3
BAND: BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE
SONG: "Hand of Blood"
RECORD: "Hand of Blood" EP
RELEASE DATE: 8/23/05
LABEL: Trustkill
WEB: www.BulletForMyValentine1.com



TRACK 4
BAND: THE BLED
SONG: "My Assassin"
RECORD: Found In The Flood
RELEASE DATE: 8/23/05
LABEL: Vagrant Records
WEB: www.thebledsite.com



TRACK 5
BAND: AGAINST ME!
SONG: "Don't Lose Touch"
RECORD: Searching For A Former Clarity
RELEASE DATE: 9/6/05
LABEL: Fat Wreck Chords
WEB: www.fatwreck.com
www.againstme.net



TRACK 6
BAND: J. PAGE
SONG: "Personal Space Invader"
RECORD: Goodbye Chapel Hill
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Nice Guy Records
WEB: www.niceguyrecords.com



TRACK 7
BAND: THE GLOW
SONG: "I Scare Myself"
RECORD: The Ghosts Are Out
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Bankshot Records
WEB: www.bankshotrecords.com



TRACK 8
BAND: GOGOL BORDELLO
SONG: "Sally"
RECORD: Gypsy Punks Underdog World Strike
RELEASE DATE: 8/9/05
LABEL: Side One Dummy Records
WEB: www.sideonedummy.com



TRACK 9
BAND: THE EYELINERS
SONG: "Destroy"
RECORD: No Apologies
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Blackheart Records Group
WEB: www.blackheartrecords.com
www.theeyeliners.com



TRACK 10
BAND: HOUSTON CALLS
SONG: "Bob And Bonnie"
RECORD: "A Collection Of Short Stories"
RELEASE DATE: 9/2/05
LABEL: Rushmore Records
WEB: www.rushmorerecords.com



TRACK 11
BAND: DEXTER DANGER
SONG: "The Rise and Fall Of Erica Vallejo"
RECORD: Hellafornia
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Orange Peal Records, Inc.
WEB: www.dexterdanger.com



TRACK 12
BAND: HOLY MOUNTAIN
SONG: "The Lines Are Drawn"
RECORD: Entrails
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: No Idea Records
WEB: www.noidearecords.com



TRACK 13
BAND: CONCOMBRE ZOMBI
SONG: "The Ripper"
RECORD: Daylight Comes
RELEASE DATE: 8/16/05
LABEL: Hairball 8/ Psychobilly US
WEB: www.concombrezombi.com
www.psychobilly.us



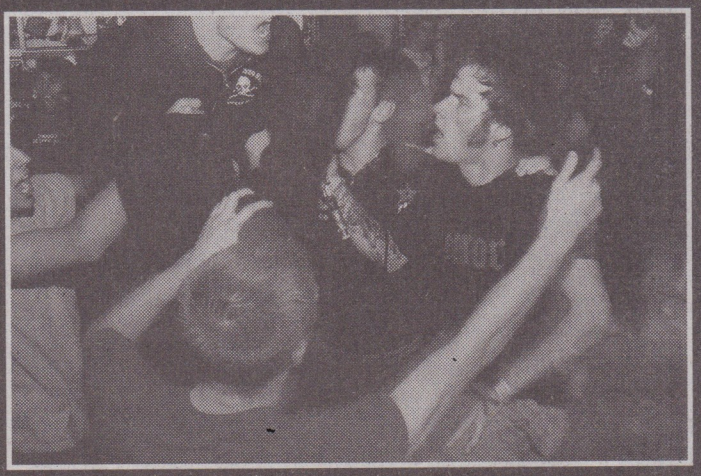
TRACK 14
BAND: CLEARVIEW KILLS
SONG: "Goodnight"
RECORD: Wrap This Around Your Neck
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Bridgeport Entertainment
WEB: www.clearviewkills.com



TRACK 15
BAND: NODES OF RANVIER
SONG: "Glass Half Nothing"
RECORD: The Years To Come
RELEASE DATE: 9/13/05
LABEL: Facedown Records
WEB: www.facedownrecords.com
www.nodesofranvier.com



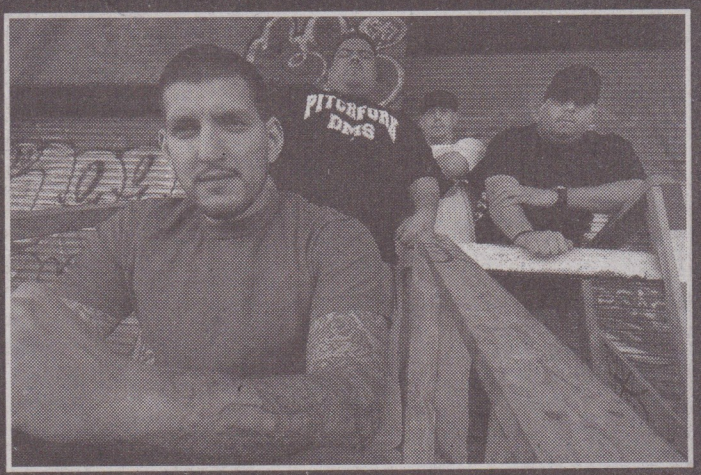
TRACK 16
BAND: MY EPIPHANY
SONG: "Final Battle"
RECORD: Mirabilia
RELEASE DATE: 5/10/05
LABEL: Eyeball Records
WEB: www.thisismyepiphany.com



TRACK 17
BAND: EMBRACE TODAY
SONG: "Diamonds Are Forever"
RECORD: We Are The Enemy
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Deathwish, Inc.
WEB: www.deathwishinc.com

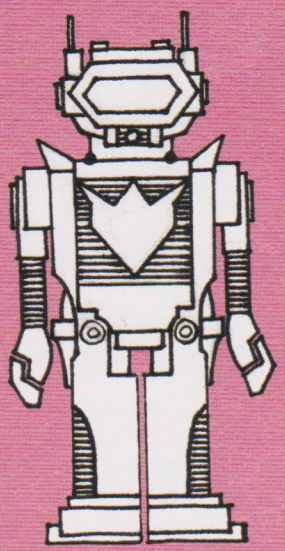


TRACK 18
BAND: THIS MOMENT
SONG: "Reaction To Rejection"
RECORD: Finding A Voice In The Dark
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Uprising Records
WEB: www.uprisingrecords.com



TRACK 19
BAND: MADBALL
SONG: "Heavenhell"
RECORD: Legacy
RELEASE DATE: 8/2/05
LABEL: Ferret Music
WEB: www.ferretstyle.com
www.madballnyhc.com

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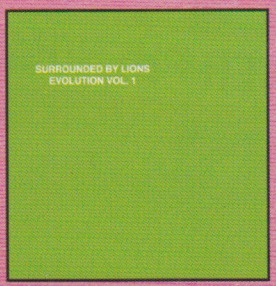
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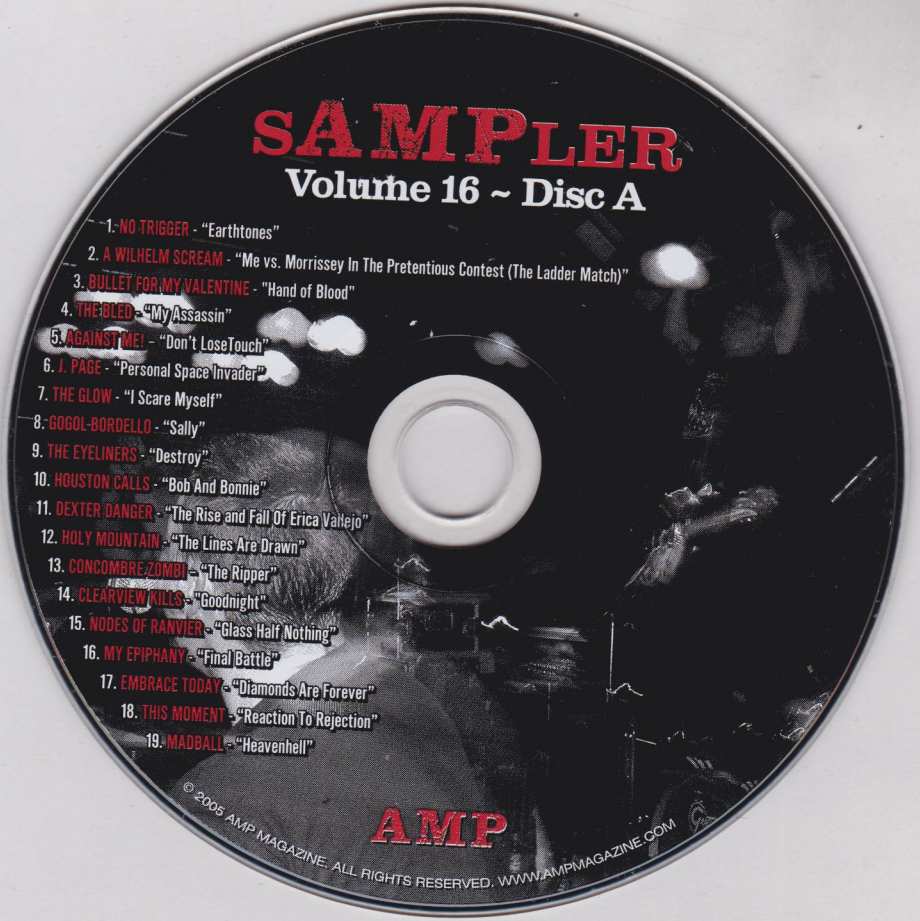
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4. PLAIN WHITE T'S - "Take Me Away"
5. FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES - "Jack And Ginger"
6. THE BLACKOUT PACT - "We Drink So You Don't Have To"
7. DOOMRIDERS - "Black Thunder"
8. SCARY KIDS SCARING KIDS - "The Only Medicine"
9. THE BANNER - "Venom & Hope"
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19. HAVOCHATE - "Fiction"
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